



# OVILOO TUNNILLIE

Life & Work

By Darlene Coward Wight

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A black and white photograph of Oviloo Tunnillie, an Inuit woman, holding a baby. She is wearing a light-colored parka with a dark fur collar. The baby is wearing a light-colored, textured sweater. The word "BIOGRAPHY" is overlaid in large, white, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the image.

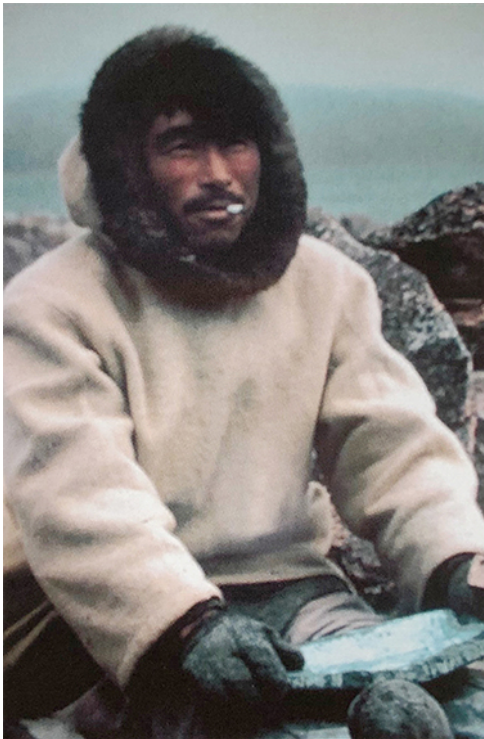
# BIOGRAPHY

Oviloo Tunnillie (1949–2014) was an internationally respected Inuit artist from the territory of Nunavut in the Canadian Arctic. In the south Baffin Island hamlet of Cape Dorset (“Kinngait” in Inuktitut), where Oviloo established her life as a sculptor, carvers were typically men, whereas women artists created drawings, prints, and textiles. Defying convention, Oviloo forged an iconic career as a stone carver. Her work challenged Inuit stereotypes, daringly exploring a wide array of subjects, including alienation, alcoholism, animal abuse, and grief. In 1966 she sold her first piece. She carved continually from 1972 to 2012, when she stopped after being diagnosed with cancer a second time. The disease claimed her life in 2014.



## EARLY YEARS

Oviloo Tunnillie was born in 1949 in Kangia, one of several small camps situated along the coast of south Baffin Island. She was the second child born to her mother, Sheokjuke (1928–2012), and her father, Toonoo (1920–1969).



LEFT: Toonoo, 1958, photograph by Charles Gimpel. RIGHT: Mary Qayuaryuk (Kudjuakjuk), *Sky Spirit*, 1977, stonecut on paper, edition of 50, 55.9 x 71.1 cm, private collection.

Oviloo's parents had been married in the early 1940s, when Sheokjuke was in her teens. Sheokjuke's mother, Mary Qayuaryuk (1908–1982), also known as Kudjuakjuk, was a respected graphic artist who created drawings and occasionally carvings from the late 1950s until her death. She was first married to a man named Pitseolak, who died young of fever, and later married a carver, Kopapik "A" (1923–1969). Toonoo had been one of five children—including Ohito (m), Napatchie (f), Koperqualuk (m), and Pilitsi (m)—most of whom died young and were childless.

Oviloo's older sister, Nuvalinga, was born in 1946. Several other children followed Oviloo: Timoon (b.1955), Jutai (1959–2015), Laimiki (b.1962), Iqaluk (b.1966), and Samonie (Sam) (1969–2017). Three children were also adopted into the family: Tuqiqi (b.1964), Eegyvudluk (b.1947), and Iyola (n.d.). One of Oviloo's siblings, Nungusuitok (b.1964), was adopted out to Mary Qayuaryuk.





This map of Baffin Island locates the hunting camps and settlements where Oviloo and her family lived before settling in Cape Dorset in 1972.

As a young child, Oviloo lived with her family in Kangia, a settlement of four or five qammait (semi-permanent sod dwellings) inhabited by Toonoo's extended family of aunts, uncles, and cousins. In an interview, Oviloo's sister Nuvalinga explained that the family remained in Kangia throughout her and Oviloo's childhood:

We lived in the qammait. In the late 1950s and very early 1960s, we finally moved out. In the spring or summer we would travel farther south to collect whatever our father was hunting in those areas. Depending on whether it was duck or goose season or caribou season or walrus season, we would move to different areas so my father could hunt. In the winter we would come back to Kangia to live until spring. . . .

In the fall there was a lot of seal-hunting. We would catch harp or bearded seal and would cache our catch in different areas. In the winter when we ran out of meat in our camp, our father would go out and get meat from a cache.<sup>1</sup>

In the 1950s and 1960s Toonoo, a respected carver, sold his work regularly to fur traders in the area.<sup>2</sup> He was one of the first artists from Cape Dorset to achieve individual recognition in the early 1950s. In 1953 his carvings were included in a historic coronation exhibition at Gimpel Fils in London, England.<sup>3</sup> A year later another major exhibition and catalogue, *Canadian Eskimo Art*, organized by the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources,<sup>4</sup> included two of his pieces: an endearing *Boy Holding Dog* and a bold *Rock Cod*, both dating to 1953-54. Toonoo's carvings show a sensitive treatment of both stone and subject matter, as in *Mother and Child*, 1960-65, part of the Winnipeg Art Gallery collection. Carefully smoothed surfaces enhance the introspective demeanour of the woman, who stands quietly while her small child peers inquisitively from the protection of her amautik.



LEFT: Toonoo, *Mother and Child*, 1960-65, stone, 16.5 x 6.9 x 7.7 cm, Winnipeg Art Gallery. RIGHT: Oviloo Tunnillie, *My Mother and Myself*, 1990, serpentinite (Kangisquutaq/Korok Inlet), 23.3 x 20.5 x 9.8 cm, signed with syllabics, Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau.



Toonoo's art fascinated the young Oviloo and would later inspire her own interest in carving. The family's camp at Kangia was located near the site of attractive serpentinite and marble stone deposits at Andrew Gordon Bay. Toonoo and two other well-known carver residents in Kangia in the 1950s, Tikitu Qinnuayuak (1908-1992) and Niviaqsi (1908-1959), used these materials for their carvings.<sup>5</sup> Still, art was always secondary in Toonoo's life. Nuvalinga recalled, "He was a carver and a hunter; a hunter more than a carver."<sup>6</sup>

## CHILDHOOD DISRUPTED

In the spring of 1955, when Oviloo Tunnillie was five years old, her life with her family came to an abrupt end. As a result of European contact and colonization, Indigenous populations had been afflicted by various diseases, including tuberculosis (TB), since the nineteenth century. By the 1950s the disease had infected increasing numbers of Inuit. Rather than build hospitals in the North, the Canadian government chose to forcibly remove Inuit patients to southern sanatoriums. A Canadian government ship called the *C.D. Howe* arrived at Kangia to screen residents for tuberculosis. After conducting chest X-rays onboard, medical staff told Oviloo and her family that she had the disease and that when the ship left, it would take her to a southern hospital. As Oviloo later recounted:



I remember, there was a ship in the community which did medical checkups. We were picked up by a boat from our tent. That's the first time I ever started crying. That was the year 1955, when I was five years old. I was told that I had TB, that's why I had to leave. . . . I don't even really recall what actually went through my mind but I know I was really sad because I was leaving my father and my mother and I was going to be alone. I was scared because I was only a little girl.<sup>7</sup>



LEFT: Party lands from the Canadian government ship *C.D. Howe* on patrol of the Eastern Arctic at Cape Dorset, July 1951, photograph by Wilfred Doucette. RIGHT: Interior view of Inuit quarters aboard the *C.D. Howe*, July 1957, photograph by Wilfred Doucette.

Oviloo was taken to the Clearwater Lake Indian Hospital in Manitoba, where she lived with other Indigenous tuberculosis patients. In the fall of the following year, she returned to her family at Kangia, but a year later the disease recurred and she was once again taken to the hospital in Manitoba, this time for two years. She said of this second departure:

I was heartbroken to have to leave my mother and father again. My father and I went to ask the nurses and government administrators not to send me away because I did not want to go. But we couldn't do anything, so I was sent to the hospital again by *C.D. Howe*, and I spent a lot of time crying under the table. We arrived in Hamilton and I spent a month there, and then I was sent to a hospital in Ninga, Manitoba, near Brandon.<sup>8</sup> At that place, I had an appointment to see two female nurses or doctors to be examined. . . . I was under their care for two years during 1957 and 1958.<sup>9</sup>

Surrounded by hospital staff who did not speak Inuktitut during both of her stays in the South, Oviloo experienced feelings of isolation that marked her memories of that time. Her treatment included periods of bedrest during which medical personnel tied her to her bed. At least one doctor sexually abused her. Oviloo would later reference this difficult time in her life in works such as *Nurse with Crying Child*, 2001, and *Oviloo in Hospital*, c.2002. Though the experience of being taken to southern hospitals was not unique to Oviloo, she remains the only Inuit artist to have referenced it directly in her work. Discussing her journey home, she remembered the joy of being back among familiar sights:



LEFT: Oviloo Tunnillie, *Nurse with Crying Child*, 2001, serpentinite (Kangiqsuqutaq/Korok Inlet), 25.7 x 15.6 x 9.5 cm, signed with syllabics and dated 2001, collection of John and Joyce Price. RIGHT: Oviloo Tunnillie, *Oviloo in Hospital*, c.2002, serpentinite (Kangiqsuqutaq/Korok Inlet) 38.1 x 12.7 x 20.3 cm, signed with syllabics, collection of Paul and Mary Dailey Desmarais.



Then during the springtime of [1958], I think it was in April, I was sent back home to Cape Dorset by plane. And from there I was taken to my parents' camp by dog team. They were living at Nuvujuak [Nuvuqujuak] at that time. While we travelled, I remember being so happy to be back home. I collected stones that I liked on the way. I had started collecting them in Ninga, especially the white stones.

Eight years old when she finally returned to her family, Oviloo found the transition back to life in the Arctic challenging. She recalled:

When I think back now, I went through some happy and some unhappy times. After I had returned to my parents' camp, I had a hard time adjusting because apparently I had adopted too much of the southern culture and I had lost some of my Inuktitut. . . . When someone brought in aged meat and I was offered some, I really thought that they were trying to kill me. I couldn't communicate with them in Inuktitut, and I did not like the taste! But later on, I realized that this kind of meat was a delicacy. I really craved milk. Since I did not like tea without milk in it, I thought my mother was just being eager for me to cry.

It was like I had just met my family for the first time. I couldn't understand their ways nor their language because I had gotten so used to the southern ways. . . . The cultures of the Inuit and the qallunaat [non-Inuit] were very different then.<sup>10</sup>





Oviloo Tunnillie, *My Family*, 2001, stone, 17.8 x 28 x 22.9 cm, private collection. Oviloo describes this as a scene from the time when her family still lived out on the land. Sheokjuke is pregnant with Jutai and carries baby Timoon in her amautik. Oviloo and her sister Nuvalinga stand near their sled dog and an inuksuk. Toonoo is seated.

Oviloo gradually adjusted to life at home with her family, which expanded in 1959. Her mother gave birth to a son, Jutai, who later became one of the most original graphic artists and carvers working in Cape Dorset. Oviloo recalled this happy period:

Later on, after we had been back to our camp for a while, my mother gave birth. . . . It was a happy time when she gave birth even though we did not like nurses or doctors being around all the time. Later on, I would go along with my father by dog team. It was fun. Dogs were so useful then, pulling a sled with a number of people on it; they were our only means of travel in those days.<sup>11</sup>

However, that same year life became more difficult when Oviloo's father, Toonoo, was sent to a hospital in the South for a year. The nature of his illness is unknown, but when he returned in 1960, the family moved from Kangia to Igalaliq, a large settlement near Cape Dorset and located close to deposits of excellent serpentinite stone. Igalaliq was also the main home of respected camp leader, artist, and shaman Kiakshuk (1888-1966), and carvers Kiugak Ashoona (1933-2014) and Qaqaq Ashoona (1928-1996).



Opening of the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative in Cape Dorset, November 1961, photograph by Terrence Ryan.

Oviloo's family was part of the first generation of Inuit artists who traded in Cape Dorset in the 1940s and 1950s and sold carvings to the Baffin Trading Company (1939-1946) and the Hudson's Bay Company. The West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative was established at Cape Dorset in 1961 and became the most important purchaser of arts and craft items. Oviloo noted, "Along with my father, other people were carving at Igalaliq-Niviaqsi and my grandmother, Kudjuakjuk."<sup>12</sup> A hard, black stone was available near the camp. A couple of kilometres away at Itilliaqjuq (also Itidliajuk) was another stone quarry and camp, where respected carvers Osuitok Ipeelee (1923-2005), his brother Sheokjuk Oqutaq (1920-1982), and Manumi Shaqu (1917-2000) frequently resided. Toonoo used stone from both these sites.



### EARLY INTEREST IN CARVING

In Oviloo Tunnillie's new home in Igalaliq, with her family, her father's influence inspired her early interest in carving. As she described:

I remember seeing the rocks, different shapes of rocks that I admired. At that time I didn't know I could carve, but by watching my father, Toonoo, I learned. I loved my father's carvings. From there I began to learn to carve, always noticing the beauty and shapes of the rock.<sup>13</sup>

Oviloo also noted an early attraction to the stones she encountered on the land:

We would travel by dog team during the month of May, and as soon as I was untied from the sled, I would go to look at rocks and collect them. I have always been fascinated by rocks for as long as I can remember.<sup>14</sup>

However, Oviloo's interest in carving did not align with the usual social roles in Inuit culture. Nuvalinga remembers that, as the oldest daughter, she was expected to help her mother with the sewing. Oviloo was not interested in sewing and enjoyed spending her time with her father. Nuvalinga recalled:

I always had to help with the sewing. My mother would start the kamiks [skin boots] and would leave the hardest heel part for me to finish. We had to make kamiks two or three times a year for our family. That's all the women did. We were always cooking or taking care of siblings. Oviloo actually started carving stones at a very young age. She was not too much into sewing like her sister and mother.<sup>15</sup>

Just as his daughter would in later years, Toonoo enjoyed creating human figures, and a *Mother and Child* of his from the early 1960s is in the Winnipeg Art Gallery collection. Another piece by Toonoo from the early 1950s, *Boy Holding Dog*, foreshadows the respect and affection for the animal that Oviloo would depict in her own sculptures—for example, *Protecting the Dogs*, 2002.

In 1966 Oviloo created a large *Mother and Child* carving. Although at the time there were a few Inuit women who carved sporadically—Kenojuak and Qaunaq Mikkigak, for example—in the camp where Oviloo lived with her family all the carvers were men. This absence of female exemplars did not deter Oviloo. Toonoo took his daughter's first carving, along with several of his own pieces, to a Hudson's Bay Company trading post several miles away from where they were living. The carvings were traded for goods available at the post. Oviloo remembered this work in several conversations, including in 1994:

Then in 1966 when I was seventeen, I made my first carving to see if I had a talent for it like my father did, and I was so happy to get things I wanted when I got paid for it. I bought canvas and duffle with the money. I found, too, that I enjoyed making carvings.<sup>16</sup>



Oviloo Tunnillie, *On My Father's Shoulders*, 2002, stone, 39.4 x 20.3 x 17.8 cm, private collection.



LEFT: Toonoo carving a qulliq in Cape Dorset, September 1958, photograph by Charles Gimpel. RIGHT: Oviloo Tunnillie, *My Father Carving a Bear*, 2004, serpentine, antler, 35.6 x 30.5 x 22.9 cm, private collection.

Toonoo's carvings and Oviloo's 1966 piece all appear to be made from the dark grey serpentine found near Kangia, and Oviloo would have used her father's hand tools, an axe and files, to create this work. There is little movement or detailing, and it is more similar to the style of Toonoo's carvings than to the ones Oviloo would go on to create. But completing and selling this first work proved to be a formative experience. When Oviloo returned to carving in the early 1970s, this early sense of fulfilment propelled by her intense skill would contribute to her confidence that there would be buyers for her art, essential if her work was to gain the respect of her community.

### MARRIAGE AND LIFE IN CAPE DORSET

The late 1960s were marked by tragedy for Oviloo Tunnillie. Her father, Toonoo, was shot to death in 1969 by her sister Nuvalinga's spouse Mikkigak Kingwatsiak, in what was believed to be a hunting accident. Toonoo was a highly respected member of his community, both for his hunting prowess and his pleasant personality. His death was a great shock, and this trauma would re-emerge twenty-five years later when Mikkigak, believing that he was about to die from an illness, confessed to murdering Toonoo. When Mikkigak unexpectedly recovered, Oviloo's mother, Sheekjuke, declared that no charges would be laid and that forgiveness would replace punishment.<sup>17</sup> Her decision fits both with her religious beliefs and with the traditional Inuit conception of justice, which does not include imprisonment. The family continues to feel the effects of Toonoo's death and even today refuses to discuss the details of his murder.



At the time of her father's death, Oviloo was the oldest of her siblings living with their mother, and with the loss of their family provider, she was married to Iyola Tunnillie (b.1952) in 1969. Iyola was from an artistic family that included his well-known carver father, Qabaroak (Kabubuwa) Tunnillie (1928–1993); his mother, Tayaraq Tunnillie (1934–2015); and his grandmother Ikayukta Tunnillie (1911–1980). Ikayukta had begun drawing around 1963 and created prolifically until her death. Her daughter, Kakulu Sagiatuk (b.1940), is also a prolific graphic artist. Ikayukta was a positive influence on Oviloo, who depicted her in several sculptures, including *Ikayukta Tunnillie Carrying Her Drawings to the Co-op*, 1997, and *Ikayukta Tunnillie Holding Her Drawing of an Owl*, c.2008. Oviloo said of Ikayukta:

I really liked my husband's grandmother. . . . We lived in the same house and I looked after her. It was only when she wasn't going to live for too much longer she moved out of our house. I think of the advice she used to give me and I can still use the advice today.<sup>18</sup>



LEFT: Oviloo Tunnillie, *Ikayukta Tunnillie Holding Her Drawing of an Owl*, c.2008, serpentinite (Kangiqsuqutaq/Korok Inlet), 36.8 x 34.3 x 25.4 cm, signed with syllabics, collection of John and Joyce Price. RIGHT: Ikayukta Tunnillie, *The Three Spirits*, 1971, stonecut on paper, 61.2 x 86.5 cm, Winnipeg Art Gallery.



LEFT: Ikayukta Tunnillie with Eliakami viewing her prints, c.1978, photograph by George Hunter. RIGHT: Oviloo Tunnillie in Cape Dorset, 1987, photograph by John Paskievich.

Oviloo had moved with her family to Igalaliq, in the Cape Dorset area, in 1959 or 1960.<sup>19</sup> She stated that she spent six months in Cape Dorset in 1970 and sold her second carving at that time. The West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative, which did not incorporate until 1961 but had been publishing annual print collections since 1959, provided a way for local artists to guarantee a market for their work. The Co-op's purchase of carvings and drawings to make prints had increased after the 1965 creation of its central marketing agency, Canadian Arctic Producers, then located in Ottawa.

Between 1972 and 1984 Oviloo and Iyola had six children: daughter Alasua (b.1972); daughter Saila (b.1973), who was adopted out;<sup>20</sup> son Tytoosie (b.1974); son Noah (b.1976); son Etidloi (b.1982); and daughter Komajuk (1984-1997).<sup>21</sup> In 1972, after the birth of Alasua, Oviloo and Iyola moved permanently into the community of Cape Dorset.

The family's settlement was later than that of many other artists who moved into Cape Dorset in the 1960s to find employment or so their children could attend school. As a hunter, Iyola did not need to be in town to support the family. In the early years of their marriage, the couple was able to live on the land, though they were never far from the community. Later in her life, Oviloo would link the beginning of her artistic career to their move into town: "I have been carving ever since my [first] daughter was born in 1972," she said.<sup>22</sup> She began regularly

making carvings because she needed money to buy milk,<sup>23</sup> and her work soon became the family's primary source of income. Maternal and artistic roles are combined in her large *Self-Portrait with Daughter Alasua in 1972, 2000*. Here, Oviloo shows herself ready to work on a raw piece of carving stone with an axe.



Cape Dorset, 2004, photograph by Darlene Coward Wight.

In the early 1970s Oviloo participated in a West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative jewellery project that began in 1971.<sup>24</sup> It was one of several experimental projects, including film animation, weaving, ceramics, and typographical printing, initiated by the Co-op at that time to develop "Cape Dorset's creative aspect."<sup>25</sup> The jewellery program gave employment to both women and men; they learned to use ivory, bone, and stone to fashion necklaces, earrings, buckles, cufflinks, pendants, and pins. Carvers were taught the technique of casting using familiar hand tools and bronze and silver instead of stone.

In 1976 a much-publicized sales exhibition, *Debut—Jewellery from Cape Dorset*, was organized by the Canadian Guild of Crafts (now La Guilde) in Montreal, and twelve of Oviloo's pieces were included.<sup>26</sup> A cast bronze *Man and Bear*, 1974-76, by Oviloo from that show is now in the guild's permanent collection, but the locations of the other works—which were untitled on the guild's list for the exhibition—are unknown. The jewellery project was discontinued shortly after the exhibit, as it was not economically feasible for the Co-op, but for about four years it gave Oviloo another source of income in addition to stone carving. It also made it possible for the first of Oviloo's works to be included in a public exhibition and must have given her encouragement to continue carving to support her growing family.





Oviloo Tunnillie, *Man and Bear*, 1974–76, cast bronze, 4.4 x 3.8 x 1.9 cm, unsigned, La Guilde, Montreal.

#### ESTABLISHING A CARVING CAREER

Throughout the 1970s Oviloo Tunnillie worked at home, using hand tools to create realistic subjects, such as *Dogs Fighting*, c.1975, *Dog and Bear*, 1977, and more typical depictions of wildlife, particularly birds. She also carved domestic scenes such as *Mother Cleaning Child's Nose*, 1977. Intimate subjects such as this were unusual for a Cape Dorset carver, probably because most carvers were male. They were much more usual in communities with a high number of female carvers, such as Nauyasat (Repulse Bay) in the 1960s and Salluit in the 1950s.

Initially, the Co-op sold individual works of Oviloo's to commercial galleries in the South, but her career changed when the Canadian Guild of Crafts in Montreal held her first solo show in June 1981. After this exhibit, Dorset Fine Arts (DFA) in Toronto began to hold her work for solo exhibitions organized by interested commercial galleries.

Two solo exhibitions at the Inuit Galerie in Mannheim, West Germany, in 1988 and 1992, introduced Oviloo's work to an international audience. The dealers, including Josef Antonitsch, the most important point of connection between Inuit artists and European collectors in the 1980s, saw Oviloo's work at DFA and asked to show it in Europe. The 1988 exhibition was accompanied by a catalogue that illustrated several bird carvings and those of traditional human subjects, as well as the sea spirit Taleelayu. Then, in 1993, the Burdick Gallery in Washington, DC, organized an exhibition, aptly titled *An Inuit Woman Challenges Tradition: Sculpture by Oviloo Tunnillie*.

In 1988, Oviloo had begun carving with electric tools. In an interview with curators Susan Gustavison and Pamela Brooks, she mentioned having taken these up after an operation on her arm. Electric tools enabled Oviloo to create sculptures with less effort. During this period, Oviloo, who also had new access to television, shifted the subject matter of her work to include figures from outside Inuit culture, as in *Football Player*, 1981. She also began to create remembered scenes, including *My Mother and Myself*, 1990. As she stated in a later interview: "Back in the 1980s, I was asking myself, 'How will I make art?' It didn't make sense to me to carve scenes of traditional life because I was not there. So I began to carve from my own experiences—both happy and sad."<sup>27</sup>

Another shift occurred in Oviloo's work in the 1990s, when single female figures dressed in long, flowing robes, as in *Grieving Woman*, 1997, became frequent subjects. The garments were culturally unspecific and gave prominence to expressive and often emotional body language that verged on the abstract.



Left to right: Terrence Ryan, Pudlo Pudlat, Pitseolak Ashoona, Napachie Pootoogook, Kiakshuk, Parr, Joanasie Salamomie. Seated front: Eegyvadluk Ragee, unidentified child, Kenojuak Ashevak, and Lucy Qinnuayuak in front of the print shop, 1961, photograph by B. Korda.



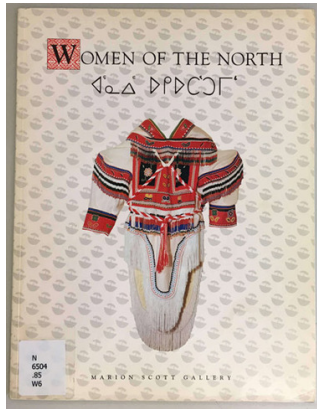
In 1992, Judy Scott Kardosh (1939–2014), director of the Marion Scott Gallery in Vancouver, organized the first of several exhibitions featuring Oviloo's sculptures. The show was titled *Women of the North: An Exhibition of Art by Inuit Women of the Canadian Arctic*, and in the foreword to the catalogue, Kardosh explained her ongoing relationship with Oviloo:

I first became aware of Oviloo

Tunnillie's sculpture in the fall of 1991. I had already started the process of selecting pieces for a large exhibition of Inuit women's art that was scheduled to open at the Marion Scott Gallery the following summer [*Women of the North*], and some of the suppliers of northern art who were helping me were determined to bring the work of some younger artists to my attention. Oviloo Tunnillie, a relatively unknown sculptor from Cape Dorset, was one of these. I had seen some of her work before—mostly descriptions of wildlife, including some especially skillful depictions of birds. The work I now saw in 1991 was completely different: a young girl in a modern dress beside two veiled women in high heels; a seated woman in the nude, her expressionless face gazing into the distance as though lost in private contemplation. To say the least, this was not conventional Inuit work.<sup>28</sup>

The sculpture described by Kardosh was *This Has Touched My Life*, 1991–92. The Canadian Museum of Civilization (now the Canadian Museum of History) purchased the sculpture, the first of Oviloo's works to be acquired by a public art gallery. Kardosh explained that Oviloo's daring subjects became major highlights of the show, giving it an edge that it would otherwise have lacked. Oviloo came to Vancouver to attend the exhibition's opening, and during her stay Kardosh discussed with her the possibility of a future solo exhibition.

Within two years, in June 1994, Oviloo produced enough work for a major solo show. Oviloo's new works dealt with themes such as alienation (*Sitting Woman*, 1993), Inuit mythology (*Diving Sedna*, 1994), and sexual abuse (*Nude*, 1993), with a clear focus on female imagery. Kardosh noted that despite some initial resistance from viewers and Inuit art collectors accustomed to more romantic and traditional representations of northern life, the show, called simply *Oviloo Tunnillie*, proved to be an important critical and commercial success.<sup>29</sup> These early exhibitions marked the beginning of a highly productive relationship between the artist and Marion Scott Gallery, one that continued for the rest of the decade and resulted in four additional solo exhibitions.<sup>30</sup>



LEFT: Cover of catalogue for the exhibition *Women of the North* at Marion Scott Gallery. RIGHT: Oviloo Tunnillie, *Bird Woman*, 1990s, serpentinite (Kangiqsuqtaq/Korok Inlet), 30.2 x 42.8 x 13.3 cm, Winnipeg Art Gallery.



Oviloo Tunnillie, *Sedna*, 2008, serpentinite (Kangiqsuqtaq/Korok Inlet), 20.3 x 48.3 x 19.1 cm, signed with syllabics, collection of Gail and Jerry Korpan.

In 1994, the Canadian Museum of Civilization included *This Has Touched My Life* in a major exhibition and catalogue, *Inuit Women Artists: Voices from Cape Dorset*, which were curated and edited by Odette Leroux, Marion E. Jackson, and Minnie Aodla Freeman. Several other works by Oviloo—including *Hawk Taking Off*, c.1987; *Woman Passed Out*, 1987; and *Woman in High Heels*, 1987—were purchased by the museum for this landmark exhibition. Nine female artists were featured: six graphic artists and three who created carvings: Qaunaq Mikkigak, Oopik Pitseolak (b.1946), and Oviloo. The catalogue included an insightful autobiography by Oviloo that she titled “Some Thoughts about My Life and Family.”

### A CONTEMPORARY ARTIST

A number of publications brought Oviloo Tunnillie’s work to wide public attention in the 1990s. Catalogues were published by Marion Scott Gallery to accompany exhibitions in 1994 and 1996. They included colour illustrations of key works and scholarly introductions by Judy Kardosh’s son and curator at the Marion Scott Gallery, Robert Kardosh. Perceptive articles were written by art critic Peter Millard and published in *Inuit Art Quarterly* in 1992 and 1994.<sup>31</sup> In 1996 and 2009 art critic Robin Laurence contributed articles about Oviloo’s sculpture to the magazine *Border*



Oviloo Tunnillie, 1992, photograph by John Graydon.

*Crossings* and placed her work within the mainstream of contemporary art.<sup>32</sup> Commenting on works such as *Woman Carving Stone*, 2008, and *Tired Woman*, 2008 (both studies in individual emotions), these writers reflected upon Oviloo’s personal imagery, highlighting how her work’s emotional expressiveness was not culturally specific but universal. Laurence mentions that hands in Oviloo’s sculptures are often disproportionately large and are an important element of expression.

In the 1990s two documentary films were produced that focused on Oviloo’s work, along with that of two other artists in each case. In 1993, Inuit Art Section, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, engaged Connie Cochran and Denise Withers to direct the film *Keeping Our Stories Alive: The Sculpture of Canada’s Inuit*. It featured two other carvers, Uriash Puqignak (b.1946) from Gjoa Haven, Nunavut, and Lucy Meeko (1929–2004) from Kuujjuaraapik, Nunavik. On November 12, 1997, a wide television audience viewed Adrienne Clarkson’s episode “Women’s Work: Inuit Women Artists” on the weekly program *Adrienne Clarkson Presents*. Clarkson travelled with her film crew to Cape Dorset and Holman (now Ulukhaktok) to interview Oviloo, as well as Oopik Pitseolak and Elsie Klengenberg (b.1946).



As Clarkson explains in her introduction, "My fascination with Inuit women artists was ignited by a recent exhibition of the work of Oviloo Tunnillie. Her carvings seem to embody both the heartbreaking and the irreverent, and they displayed a kind of elegant simplicity that left me awestruck."<sup>33</sup> The exhibition Clarkson references was at Marion Scott Gallery, and Oviloo's heartbreaking and irreverent work would have surprised viewers whose idea of Inuit art was likely based on the conventional subject matter of most artists at the time. Oviloo's responses to Clarkson's questions were possibly equally eye-opening; she explained that her carving, *Nude*, 1993, was actually about the sexual assault she had experienced when in the hospital in Manitoba (likely the Clearwater Lake Indian Hospital). The stricken figure lays on her back with a hand protectively covering her groin. "This one is about child molestation. I have gone through that experience when I was a little girl."



LEFT: Oviloo Tunnillie on the steps outside the Vancouver Art Gallery, June 1992, photographer unknown. RIGHT: Oviloo Tunnillie, *Two Women in Distress*, 2001, stone, 25.4 x 10.2 x 7.6 cm, private collection.

The excitement generated by the broadcast of Clarkson's film was soon replaced by sorrow. At the age of thirteen, Oviloo's youngest daughter, Komajuk, committed suicide while the family was gathered watching television in another part of their house. In response to this devastating loss, Oviloo created her first *Grieving Woman*, in 1997, marking a significant turning point in her life and her career. In her work that followed, Oviloo would return again and again to figures of women gripped by versions of this sadness.

## BEYOND CAPE DORSET

Starting in 2000, Oviloo Tunnillie's family moved several times over a five-year period, first to Toronto, and then to Montreal, with stops in Ottawa. According to Iyola Tunnillie, he was the first to travel to Toronto in 2000. He accompanied his youngest son, Etidloi, who was receiving a medical assessment for mental health issues. They had to stay in the city for Etidloi to undergo a prolonged period of treatment and stabilization with medications.<sup>34</sup> Oviloo joined the men in Toronto in 2000 or 2001, along with her eldest son, Tytoosie, and adopted granddaughter, Tye. The sculpture *Self-Portrait (Arriving in Toronto)*, 2002, shows Oviloo with a suitcase at the Toronto airport. Her short-sleeved dress reflects her arrival into a new southern culture.

In the South, Oviloo ordered stone from the Co-op in Cape Dorset and carved to support her entire family. They lived in rooming houses, and Oviloo likely worked wherever they lived. She created many of her female torsos during this period. Another notable Inuit carver, Ohito Ashoona (b.1952), was also living in Toronto at the time and provided the family with some assistance, including giving Oviloo carving stone.

The financial pressure of supporting her family in the city had a detrimental effect on Oviloo's work. John Westren, who was employed at Dorset Fine Arts in Toronto at the time, remembered: "A number of Inuit told her she could do so much better in the South, but it didn't work out and her work suffered. Her whole family eventually came down and she was the sole breadwinner. She had to whip off some very pedestrian things, some very repetitive work, standard women kneeling and praying. . . . [DFA] didn't buy much of her work while she was in Toronto."<sup>35</sup>

While in Toronto, Oviloo and her husband attempted to sell work directly to tourist-oriented stores such as Eskimo Art Gallery on Toronto's Harbourfront. However, as Westren explained: "The tourist industry dried up after 9/11 [2001] and tourists stopped crossing the border. Also, the gallery didn't buy much of Oviloo's work because it didn't appeal to tourists."

Nonetheless, in November 2002, the Toronto gallery Feheley Fine Arts organized the exhibition *Toonoo's Legacy*, featuring art by members of Oviloo's family, including her parents, Toonoo and Sheokjuke; Oviloo herself; her brothers Sam and Jutai; and her sons Tytoosie, Noah, and Etidloi. Most of the family attended the opening. Two of Oviloo's carvings in this exhibition were



Oviloo Tunnillie, *Self-Portrait (Arriving in Toronto)*, 2002, serpentinite (Kangiisquutaq/Korok Inlet), 35.6 x 17.8 x 14 cm, signed with syllabics and dated 2002, collection of Andrea Ziegler.



LEFT: Exhibition pamphlet for *Toonoo's Legacy* at Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto, 2002. RIGHT: Oviloo Tunnillie, *My Father Toonoo Building an Inukshuk*, 1995, stone, 40.6 x 28.5 x 17.7 cm, private collection.





nostalgic memories of her father: *On My Father's Shoulders*, 2002 and *Ataata*, 2002, the Inuit term of endearment for "father."

After more than a year in Toronto, the family gradually moved to Montreal between 2002 and 2005, and independently sold their work to Galerie Elca London and several other buyers and entrepreneurs. In the spring of 2003 Oviloo travelled to Vancouver for the filming of a documentary about her work for the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN).<sup>36</sup> She returned to Cape Dorset permanently in 2005 after the death of her sister Nuvalinga's daughter. Iyola soon joined her, and their children have divided their time between North and South ever since.

Soon after Oviloo's return to Cape Dorset, she discovered that she had ovarian cancer and was forced to stop carving while undergoing treatment. She had become estranged from Judy Kardosh and Marion Scott Gallery after her move to the South, but she re-established the relationship after returning to Cape Dorset and during her illness.

From October to November 2008 an important new exhibition, *Oviloo Tunnillie: Meditations on Womanhood*, revealed that Oviloo's strength and imaginative powers had returned.<sup>37</sup> Some of her most emotionally expressive works were included in this exhibition, such as *Tired Woman*, 2008; *Woman Carving Stone*, 2008; *Woman with Stone Block*, 2007; and *Sedna*, 2007, a very human study in fatigue. This was the last creative collaboration between the gallery and the artist. Both women suffered declining health, Kardosh with complications from diabetes and Oviloo with her recurring cancer. Kardosh passed away in November 2014.

For the last two years of her life in Cape Dorset, Oviloo was unable to work, and she succumbed to cancer on June 12, 2014.



Oviloo Tunnillie, 1992, photograph by John Graydon.



Oviloo Tunnillie's (1949–2014) carving career spanned over forty-five years, from 1966 until 2012, when she became too ill to work. Oviloo began carving conventional representations of wildlife, but in the 1980s she gradually abandoned these for the personal and contemporary subjects that would define her work. Three years spent in southern tuberculosis hospitals as a child resulted in carved scenes of stark isolation, while the purchase of a television later in life would inspire sculptures of sports figures such as football players and a downhill skier. Whether grief-stricken or full of hope, her human figures express intense emotions solely through the medium of stone.





# OVILOO TUNNILLIE

Life & Work by Darlene Coward Wight

## MOTHER AND CHILD 1966



Oviloo Tunnillie, *Mother and Child*, 1966

Serpentine (Kangia), 43 x 24 x 17 cm

Unsigned

Government of Nunavut Fine Art Collection; on long-term loan to the  
Winnipeg Art Gallery

In 1966 Oviloo Tunnillie created a *Mother and Child* carving, using a typical composition of a standing woman “packing” a small child, whose head peeks out from the mother’s amautik (maternal parka). The serpentinite stone for the carving came from the large deposit located near her family’s camp at Kangia. She remembered this sculpture in several conversations and described both the satisfaction of being able to sell a piece of work and the joy she found in carving it.<sup>1</sup> As her older sister, Nuvalinga, recalled:

I remember when Oviloo did her first sculpture of a woman. Our father had come with his finished pieces to sell to the traders at the time and he brought Oviloo’s as well. When our father came back after he had sold this piece, he had bought tent material. The tent canvas was actually bought for Oviloo so she could have her own little tent. Girls always had their own miniature tents at that time.<sup>2</sup>

Oviloo explained that her earliest carvings, including *Mother and Child*, were all made with an axe and file.<sup>3</sup> This is true of another early sculpture, *Owl*, made shortly before the birth of her son Tytoosie in 1974. Years later she told collector Marnie Schreiber that it was done in the style of her father, Toonoo (1920–1969), a noted carver in the 1950s and 1960s, whom Oviloo preferred to spend time watching carve rather than sewing with her mother and Nuvalinga. She remembered using an axe on the body and sandpaper to shape the feathers on the wings. Schreiber noted, “Oviloo was so impressed with the way she had shaped the claws on the owl that she laughed, and said she did not know how she did them.”<sup>4</sup>

After carving *Mother and Child* in 1966, Oviloo did not create another work until a six-month stay in Cape Dorset (“Kinngait” in Inuktitut) in 1970 when she sold a carving to the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative. Then, Oviloo did not make any further carvings until 1972, the year that she and her husband, Iyola, made the permanent move into Cape Dorset and the year their first child, daughter Alasua, was born. Oviloo marked the significance of this year in 2000 when she created a sculpture titled *Self-Portrait with Daughter Alasua in 1972*. This sculpture acknowledged her new dual roles of carver and mother.



Oviloo Tunnillie, *Self-Portrait with Daughter Alasua in 1972, 2000*, serpentinite (Kangiqsuqtaq/Korok Inlet), 40.6 x 45.7 x 19.1 cm, signed with syllabics and dated 2000, Fehely Fine Arts, Toronto.



## DOGS FIGHTING C.1975



Oviloo Tunnillie, *Dogs Fighting*, c.1975  
Serpentine (source unknown), 43.3 x 38.9 x 4 cm  
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

One of Oviloo Tunnillie's earliest known sculptures from the 1970s is *Dogs Fighting*, c.1975. A masterfully complex composition of four dogs forming a pyramid of interlocking bodies, in 1994 it was included in the major exhibition and catalogue *Inuit Woman Artists: Voices from Cape Dorset*, produced by the Canadian Museum of Civilization (now Canadian Museum of History).

Dogs were not a frequent subject for Oviloo and for Inuit carvers in general, but they were an important part of Oviloo's life and traditional Inuit culture. In

an interview in 1991 she explained, “I have always liked dogs and for a little while I carved dogs. . . . I have carved this, depicting dogs in a fight. Dogs used to get into a fight with each other.”<sup>1</sup> Another of her realistic dog sculptures, *Dog and Bear*, 1977, is in the collection of the Canada Council Art Bank, Ottawa. Oviloo also used dogs to directly address the colonization of northern communities in *Protecting the Dogs*, 2002, which references the slaughter of Inuit sled dogs by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in the 1950s and 1960s.

*Dogs Fighting* reflects the elegant and realistic animal compositions Oviloo created in the 1970s and 1980s. As she developed her skills as a carver, her work began to demonstrate the nuance and complexity that would define her career. Carvings of animals were the most frequent subjects for Cape Dorset artists at this time, and remain so to the present. Both here and in other animal works from this period, Oviloo paid great attention to creating realistic depictions. In *Hawk Taking Off*, c.1987, for example, her degree of naturalistic detail, from the feathers to the claws, surpasses that achieved by many other artists, with the notable exception of the wildlife depicted in the prints and sculpture of the renowned Cape Dorset artist Kananginak Pootoogook (1935–2010). As in Kananginak’s art, it is possible to distinguish the exact species of her birds: in this case, a rough-legged hawk. Oviloo would have known Kananginak’s work, and he was quite possibly a source of inspiration for her.



LEFT: Oviloo Tunnillie, *Hawk Taking Off*, c.1987, serpentinite (Kangiqsuqutaq/Korok Inlet), 17.4 x 72 x 38 cm, signed with syllabics, Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau.  
RIGHT: Kananginak Pootoogook, *Qinnuajuaq*, 1976, lithograph, edition of 50, 58.4 x 48.2 cm, Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau.







# OVILOO TUNNILLIE

Life & Work by Darlene Coward Wight

## FOOTBALL PLAYER 1981



Oviloo Tunnillie, *Football Player*, 1981  
Serpentine (Tatsiituq), 52 x 29 x 17 cm  
Government of Nunavut's Fine Art Collection; on long-term loan to the  
Winnipeg Art Gallery

In the early 1980s Oviloo Tunnillie's work began to incorporate some decidedly untraditional subjects. In 1981 she carved two helmeted football players.<sup>1</sup> The work was an important precursor to Oviloo's later sculptures in the 1990s, such as *Woman Thinking*, 1996, which blur cultural distinctions, no longer showing people in fur clothing and pursuing a life of hunting and fishing. *Football Player* pointed to her interest in providing a more contemporary representation of Inuit life and art.

Her husband, Iyola Tunnillie (b.1952), explained that Oviloo enjoyed watching football games on television. The two figures have a similar pose, each using one hand to hold a football to the chest. With faces hidden behind helmets and bulky shoulder pads, they seem barely human—as they would have appeared from the distance created by the television cameras. The only feature to individualize one of the players is the number 87 on the front of his jersey.

Oviloo told curator Odette Leroux that the story of this carving is “about the fact that I can now watch [the football games].”<sup>2</sup> Fascinated whenever the Olympics were televised, she created other athletes, such as *Discus Thrower*, 1980; *Dancer*, 1995; *Skater*, 1998; and *Synchronized Swimmer*, 1999. Iyola explained that she would make a carving of an athletic figure right after watching it on television.<sup>3</sup>

Oviloo was so excited when she finished her first football player that she made an announcement on the local radio station in Cape Dorset, urging people to go to the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative to see the sculpture before the Co-op shipped it to its southern marketing agency, Dorset Fine Arts, in Toronto.<sup>4</sup> When the sculpture arrived at the Toronto offices, it drew prompt attention. It was immediately purchased by Inuit Art Section of the federal Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.<sup>5</sup> At that time, Inuit Art Section owned an extensive collection of Inuit art and crafts that dated from the late 1940s and included sculpture, prints, drawings, and wall hangings by the most important artists from virtually every Inuit community in Canada. This collection was used to promote Inuit art nationally and internationally. In 1989 Inuit Art Section's collection was deaccessioned and dispersed to other museums and Inuit-owned collections. *Football Player* was gifted to the collection of the Inuit Cultural Institute in Arviat. This collection later became part of the Government of Nunavut Fine Art Collection, now on long-term loan to the Winnipeg Art Gallery (WAG).

In 1994, the work was exhibited in *Inuit Women Artists: Voices from Cape Dorset* at the Canadian Museum of Civilization.<sup>6</sup> It has been on display in two major WAG exhibitions, *Our Land* (2015) and *Oviloo Tunnillie: A Woman's Story in Stone* (2016), where it continually drew comment from viewers for its unconventional subject matter.



Oviloo Tunnillie, *Dancer*, 1995, serpentinite (Kangiqsuqtaq/Korok Inlet), 69.8 x 29.8 x 12.1 cm, signed with syllabics, collection of Jamie Cameron and Christopher Bredt.





# OVILOO TUNNILLIE

Life & Work by Darlene Coward Wight

## WOMAN IN HIGH HEELS 1987



Oviloo Tunnillie, *Woman in High Heels*, 1987  
Serpentine (Kangisquutaq/Korok Inlet), 67 x 20.5 x 15 cm  
Signed with syllabics  
Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau

Oviloo Tunnillie is the first Inuit stone carver to repeatedly create female nudes, a subject she favoured for its formal qualities. In 1987 she produced a large and flamboyant nude, *Woman in High Heels*. The woman is wearing nothing except high-heeled shoes on her feet. She has one hand coyly placed on her groin while the other is playfully raised to her head as if she is about to perform a pirouette.

Depictions of nudity are uncommon in Inuit art in general, probably because of the market's demand for ethnographic images of Inuit in traditional fur clothing. However, this did not deter Ovilo, who said, "I was in Montreal sometimes in the 1970s. While there I used to watch T.V. and saw nude women with high heels. . . . I like the end result very much of that piece."<sup>1</sup> Of the subject matter, Ovilo also noted, "I usually do also some [subject matter] that [is] peculiar to me. . . . And this is a true white woman; that is why she is wearing high-heeled shoes."<sup>2</sup>

Oviloo did not shy away from subjects of female sexuality. In 1975 her carving *Untitled (Masturbating Woman)* was one of her first nude female figures, another surprisingly frank work. The scarcity of Inuit art with sexual content and nudity is the subject of an article, "Inuit Men, Erotic Art" by Norman Vorano.<sup>3</sup> Vorano points out that nudity had been discouraged by missionaries and was usually only seen in depictions of myths and shamanic figures such as Taleelayu. However, Ovilo was not one to be constrained by market expectations. More recent artists, such as Annie Pootoogook (1969-2016), have created art reflecting the often-harsh modern-day details of their lives.

Between 2002 and 2005, more than ten years after carving *Woman in High Heels*, when Ovilo was in Toronto and Montreal, she created a number of headless and armless female nude torsos, such as *Seated Torso*, 2002, and *Female Torso*, 2004. They have a classical elegance reminiscent of Greek statuary. Less elegant is her carving *Nature's Call*, 2002, depicting a woman on a toilet with her pants around her ankles.



Oviloo Tunnillie, *Nature's Call*, 2002, serpentinite (Kangiisquutaq/Korok Inlet), 28.6 x 17.8 x 17.8 cm, signed with syllabics and dated 2002, Fehleley Fine Arts, Toronto.



## THIS HAS TOUCHED MY LIFE 1991-92



Oviloo Tunnillie, *This Has Touched My Life*, 1991-92

Serpentine (Tatsiituq); woman, 16.7 x 9.5 x 7 cm; woman and child, 16.5 x 19.2 x 10.5 cm; man, 18.5 x 9 x 5.25 cm; car, 3 x 9.2 x 4.2 cm

Signed with syllabics

Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau

In *This Has Touched My Life*, 1991-92, a young girl in modern dress stands beside two veiled women, a man, and an automobile in a sculptural grouping. The work is the first of Oviloo Tunnillie's carvings to directly reference her years in the Manitoba hospital where she was treated for tuberculosis. Oviloo initially titled the carving *The Group* for a 1992 exhibition at Marion Scott Gallery in Vancouver.<sup>1</sup> The title was later changed to *This Has Touched My Life*, and the work was acquired by the Canadian Museum of Civilization (now the Canadian Museum of History) for the exhibition *Inuit Women Artists: Voices from Cape Dorset* in 1994. In a text for the exhibition catalogue, Oviloo said of this piece:

When I was in a hospital away from home, it was during the years of 1957, 1958 and 1959. While I was away, I was taken by automobile to see these two women from the hospital where I stayed. . . . When I saw these two [women], I really noticed the way they were dressed and their faces were hidden. . . . They were unrecognizable as they wore hats that had lace pulled down in front of their faces and they each had purses. I really looked at how they were dressed and having seen them like this has been most memorable for me. I had not met

any white person such as these two yet. I wonder sometimes if they were ashamed of their faces because I've never seen that before. . . . [It] was after we moved out of the hospital that we went to see these two veiled women. So this has been the most memorable part of my life while I was away there.<sup>2</sup>

In the sculpture *Oviloo* appears as a small child with the two veiled women, the driver of the car in a suit, and the car, as she described. The only physical connection between the figures is a dominating hand one of the women has placed firmly on the top of *Oviloo's* head. One of the few known carvings by *Oviloo* with multiple separate, free-standing elements, this composition captures the sense of alienation and strangeness of her memory of the experience. It stands in complete contrast to her tight-knit grouping, *Oviloo's Family*, 2002, in which the figures are woven together into one entity.



LEFT: Oviloo Tunnillie, *Oviloo's Family*, 2002, serpentine (Kangiqsuqutaq/Korok Inlet), 37.5 x 22.9 x 30.5 cm, signed with syllabics and dated 2002, collection of Barry Appleton. RIGHT: Oviloo Tunnillie, *Nurse*, 1995, serpentine (Kangiqsuqutaq/Korok Inlet) 52.2 x 28.0 x 5.2 cm, signed with syllabics, collection of Jamie Cameron and Christopher Bredt, Toronto.



When shown a photograph of this sculpture, *Oviloo's* sister Nuvalinga commented that they cut *Oviloo's* hair when she was in the hospital. "She had really long hair when she left. Girls' hair was never cut back then."<sup>3</sup> Apart from revealing the culturally insensitive treatment of Inuit girls, this observation helps to identify other autobiographical carvings that depict *Oviloo* when she was still in the hospital or had recently returned home to her parents' camp. For example, a tender portrait titled *My Mother and Myself*, 1990, shows a short-haired *Oviloo* with her mother, Sheokjuke (1928-2012).

The sadness of the hospital years is poignantly expressed in several other sculptures. *Nurse with Crying Child*, 2001, shows *Oviloo* as a weeping child on the lap of a nurse in the hospital. In *Nurse*, 1995, the large figure of a nurse strikes a somewhat ridiculous pose, possibly thinking that she was entertaining a lonely, grief-stricken little girl.

Two other pieces portray *Oviloo* as a timid child with a teddy bear held behind her back (as in *Self-Portrait at Manitoba Hospital (Holding Teddy Bear)*, 2010) and as a weeping child kneeling at what may be a chest of drawers (*Oviloo in Hospital*, c.2002). *Oviloo* explained that for a time she had her own room "filled with girl things that had been bought for me."<sup>4</sup> It is quite clear that the hospital, typically, made no effort to dress their Indigenous patients in ways that respected their cultures. Another hospital piece is wrenching in its raw emotion, as *Oviloo* screams while tied to her hospital bed (*Oviloo in Hospital Bed*, c.2000).





# OVILOO TUNNILLIE

Life & Work by Darlene Coward Wight

## SKIER 1993



Oviloo Tunnillie, *Skier*, 1993  
Serpentine (source unknown), 30 x 31 x 44 cm  
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

Oviloo Tunnillie's carving now known as *Skier* first appeared as *Torso Fragment* in the Marion Scott Gallery 1994 exhibition *Oviloo Tunnillie*. As it was being considered for acquisition by the National Gallery of Canada, curator Christine Lalonde met with Oviloo in Cape Dorset to discuss its title. Oviloo explained that her sculpture of a bent human torso was originally intended to be a downhill skier. When it accidentally fell, separating at the bend, she preferred the new result. She liked the contrast of the exposed raw stone with the smoothly polished legs.<sup>1</sup> Over the years, she was to use this contrast in texture repeatedly, in works such as *Self-Portrait with Carving Stone*, 1998, and *Woman Carving Stone*, 2008.

*Skier* is a bold sculptural statement and presents a complete reversal of a romantic Western notion that figures in Inuit carving emerge from the stone in its natural state. As pointed out by Robert Kardosh of Marion Scott Gallery, "[*Skier*] challenges our image of the Inuit carver who innocently releases form in compliance with the will of the stone. Here it is the sculptural hand that prevails. . . . If the artist commands stone and not the reverse, both artistry and material were happily subjected to the dictates of chance in the execution of this piece."<sup>2</sup>

Oviloo's interest in such dramatically abstracted sculpture is evident in another of her athletes, *Synchronized Swimmer*, 1999. She commented on its form shortly after she created it:

I did the synchronized swimming where part of the body shows and part of the legs show. Sometimes I do abstract pieces. That's why they are like that. . . . When I don't know what kind of piece I am going to make, I make abstract pieces such as parts of the body.<sup>3</sup>

When one first views *Synchronized Swimmer*, one is surprised and delighted with the realization that the artist has left the underwater parts of the figure to be filled by the viewer's imagination. Through abstraction, the artist succeeds in defying the physicality of the sculpture by creating a sense of movement.



Oviloo Tunnillie, *Synchronized Swimmer*, 1999, serpentine (Kangiqsuqtaq/Korok Inlet), 17.7 x 33.6 x 12.1 cm, signed with syllabics and dated 1999, collection of Barry Appleton.





# OVILOO TUNNILLIE

Life & Work by Darlene Coward Wight

## DIVING SEDNA 1994



Oviloo Tunnillie, *Diving Sedna*, 1994  
Marble (Andrew Gordon Bay), 68 x 14 x 38 cm  
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

In 1992, Oviloo Tunnillie stated, "My favourite work is on Taleelayu—women figures."<sup>1</sup> In *Diving Sedna* the figure's face is hidden, giving prominence to the rest of the body as is typical of many of Oviloo's sculptures. Long wet hair parts around voluptuous breasts. Her whale fluke is flexed to display an enormous fan shape balancing the curved lower body. The striated textures of the hair play off the ribbed detailing of the tail. It is a bold statement in abstract form.

Oviloo created a number of these impressive nude female figures with lower torsos in the form of whale flukes or fish tails. This sea spirit is known to Inuit as Taleelayu or Nuliajuk, but non-Inuit often use the name Sedna, as did Oviloo at times. Taleelayu is a powerful female spirit believed to control the supply of sea animals to hunters. She is an archetypal figure and often appears in the work of other Inuit artists, such as *Takannaaluk*, 1994, by Germaine Arnaktauyok (b.1946). *Takannaaluk* is the name for Sedna in the Igloodik area, and Arnaktauyok depicts many elements of the story in her detailed ink drawing. However, Oviloo commented that she was not interested in these figures for the mythology they represent. In fact, it seems that she saw them as mermaids rather than shamanic beings.<sup>2</sup>

When *Diving Sedna* appeared on the cover of Marion Scott Gallery's 1994 exhibition catalogue *Oviloo Tunnillie*, it drew immediate interest and was purchased by the National Gallery of Canada. In a 1994 interview with curator Christine Lalonde, Oviloo said that she had intended the figure to be seen as if it had just dived, with her head under the water. She noted that it was marble and that this material was hard to work with.<sup>3</sup> That she used the striking white stone from Andrew Gordon Bay on south Baffin Island indicates the interest Oviloo had in this sculpture. She would have used power grinders and Dremel (electric) tools to create detail, rather than the more powerful diamond drills, which allow for more precision and became generally available to carvers on Baffin Island in the 2000s.

Oviloo created other works featuring shamanic sea creatures, including *Seaman, Seawoman and Fish*, c.1981, in the collection of the National Gallery of Canada. She mentioned this sculpture in a 1991 conversation about Taleelayu:

I have only heard about mermaids or human marine beings. I cannot say that they exist . . . since I have never seen one myself. . . . They are marine beings and fish are also marine beings. Since they are both marine beings, I just included the fish to go with the mermaids. . . . Those mermaids are sea inhabitants and at one time I used to make a lot of them. I thought, "Did they have a lifestyle like the Inuit?" It was entirely out of my personal imagination that I did it.<sup>4</sup>



Germaine Arnaktauyok, *Takannaaluk*, 1994, ink on paper, 59 x 37 cm, Winnipeg Art Gallery.





# OVILOO TUNNILLIE

Life & Work by Darlene Coward Wight

## GRIEVING WOMAN 1997



Oviloo Tunnillie, *Grieving Woman*, 1997  
Serpentine (Tatsiituq), 35 x 12.5 x 11.3 cm  
Signed with syllabics  
Winnipeg Art Gallery

Oviloo Tunnillie began to create carvings of weeping or grieving women in the late 1990s. In 1997 Oviloos thirteen-year-old daughter, Komajuk, committed suicide. The young girl unobtrusively took her own life in a bedroom closet while the rest of the family, unaware of the child's actions, watched television in another part of the house. *Grieving Woman* was the first carving Oviloos created in direct response to that personal tragedy. This quiet work expresses profound grief through the body language of the female figure. The robed woman moves slowly forward with head bowed and one hand pressed to her forehead. No facial expression is necessary to capture the figure's anguish.

The figure's simplified form and hidden face are typical of Oviloos later works, in which grief becomes a central emotion, reflecting the family tragedies that marked these years. Her beloved father, Toonoo (1920–1969), had been killed by his son-in-law, Mikkigak Kingwatsiak, in a presumed hunting accident in 1969. But in 1994, just a few years before her daughter's suicide, the shock and sadness of her father's death had been revived when Mikkigak, believing that he was about to die from an illness, confessed to murdering Toonoo.



LEFT: Oviloos Tunnillie, *Repentance*, 2001, serpentine (Kangiqsuqtaq/Korok Inlet), 48.0 x 11.6 x 12.3 cm, unsigned, collection of Fred and Mary Widding. RIGHT: Oviloos Tunnillie, *Crying Woman*, 2000, serpentine (Kangiqsuqtaq/Korok Inlet), 34.3 x 17.8 x 30.5 cm, signed with syllabics, collection of Jamie Cameron and Christopher Bredt.



While other Inuit artists such as Shuvinai Ashoona (b.1961) have addressed loss in their work—particularly in relation to suicide, a crucial social issue for Inuit communities—few have delved into the inner experience of grief. Oviloos and her brother Jutai Toonoo (1959–2015) remain two of the rare examples of Inuit artists whose work foregrounds emotion, putting aside narrative. In Oviloos's later work, *Crying Woman*, 2000, the nude subject cradles her head in her arms, which rest on her drawn-up knees. It is an image of complete introspection and vulnerability. The woman is drawn into herself, mentally and physically. In another work, *Repentance*, 2001, grief explodes from the woman in a frenzy of emotion. In all of these sculptures, emotion is expressed through the body language of the female figures.





# OVILOO TUNNILLIE

Life & Work by Darlene Coward Wight

## IKAYUKTA TUNNILLIE CARRYING HER DRAWINGS TO THE CO-OP 1997



Oviloo Tunnillie, *Ikayukta Tunnillie Carrying Her Drawings to the Co-op*, 1997  
Serpentine (Kangisquutaq/Korok Inlet), 50.5 x 29.5 x 37.0 cm  
Signed with syllabics and dated 1997  
Collection of John and Joyce Price

Oviloo Tunnillie created at least three sculptures that portray graphic artist Ikayukta Tunnillie (1911–1980), the grandmother of her husband, Iyola. In her later years, Ikayukta lived with Iyola and Oviloo and was a respected member of their family. This work, the earliest of the carvings depicting her, shows the artist carrying her drawings rolled up in a tube holder as she walks to the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative. This large, masterful carving conveys the determined effort exerted by the elderly woman as she trudges forward, stooped under the weight of the drawings on her back and leaning heavily on her cane. The softly coloured, light green stone and the highly polished surfaces all contribute to a sense of gentle strength.

Oviloo was filmed carving this sculpture in 1997 for an *Adrienne Clarkson Presents* television episode, “Woman’s Work: Inuit Women Artists.” Oviloo spoke with great affection about Ikayukta. She told Clarkson: “I really liked my husband’s grandmother, so I like the carving. I can recognize her now. . . . I think of the advice Ikayukta used to give me, and I can still use the advice today.”<sup>1</sup> Although Oviloo did not specify the precise nature of the advice Ikayukta offered, the younger artist clearly valued the elder’s artistic mentoring.



LEFT: Oviloo Tunnillie, *Woman with Stone Block*, 2007, serpentinite (Kangiqsuqutaq/Korok Inlet), 47.0 x 14.0 x 17.1 cm, signed with syllabics, collection of Elizabeth Grace and Susan Vella. RIGHT: Oviloo Tunnillie, *Woman Showing a Drawing*, 2006, serpentinite (Kangiqsuqutaq/Korok Inlet), 40.0 x 25.4 x 27.9 cm, signed with syllabics, Winnipeg Art Gallery.



Oviloo also acknowledges the achievements and positive influence of other artistic women in her family and in her community of Cape Dorset. In the self-portrait *Woman Showing a Drawing*, 2006, she proudly references the graphic art of her mother, Sheokjue (1928–2012), by displaying one of her mother’s drawings to the viewer.

In her self-portrait *Woman with Stone Block*, 2007, she alludes to the long-standing printmaking program of the Co-op. She carries a smooth, rectangular stone block that has an inuksuk carved in low relief. In an interview with Robert Kardosh, director of Marion Scott Gallery, Oviloo explained that the block represents a printing stone of the sort used by Cape Dorset printmakers to create a stonecut print.<sup>2</sup> Stonecut prints were created from the drawings submitted to the Co-op by her female family members, including her maternal grandmother, Mary Qayuaryuk (Kudjuakjuk) (1908–1982). This sculpture also gives expression to the exertion resulting from carrying heavy pieces of stone. The woman moves forward, and each slow, measured step appears to be an effort.





# OVILOO TUNNILLIE

Life & Work by Darlene Coward Wight

## SELF-PORTRAIT WITH CARVING STONE 1998



Oviloo Tunnillie, *Self-Portrait with Carving Stone*, 1998  
Serpentine (Kangisquutaq/Korok Inlet), 53.0 x 37.5 x 33.3 cm  
Signed with syllabics  
Collection of Fred and Mary Widding



Notably, although modern-day Inuit art has flourished since the early 1950s, there are remarkably few works that depict the artist in his or her role of creator (among the rare examples by graphic artists is Andrew Qappik's [b.1964] *Self-Portrait in the Printshop*, 2003), which makes this assertive self-depiction as a carver unique. Long is the history of the artist self-portrait; in this work Oviloo Tunnillie asserts her unique position within a global tradition.

By the early 1990s, with pieces such as *This Has Touched My Life*, 1991–92, Oviloo's art had become predominantly inspired by her own life and experiences. Later in the decade, her autobiographical works frequently included depictions of artmaking, either by her or by members of her family. Her artistic process is the subject of some of her most impressive sculptures, including this one.

In the large-scale *Self-Portrait with Carving Stone*, the artist appears almost to merge with her material. Her robed body crouches as she holds and stabilizes a piece of carving stone against her torso and face. The rough, unfinished texture of the uncarved serpentinite enables the viewer to realize the transformation that the artist accomplishes through her work. Oviloo's life was dominated by her self-identified role as a carver, and this was one of her frequent and powerful themes.

Oviloo spoke about this in an interview in 1998:

When I was finishing this up, I didn't want to take this [uncarved] piece off . . . just to let the public know that this is the kind of stone that we carve before we do the actual finishing. I like carvings which have unfinished parts. . . . This is what the stone actually looks [like] before it is finished.<sup>1</sup>



In *Woman Carving Stone*, 2008, the raw stone is the subject of the artist's deep contemplation. This piece was created when Oviloo used power tools, but it refers to an earlier period when an axe was her primary instrument. The woman's pose expresses fatigue and the immense physical effort she will need to carve the large piece of stone.

LEFT: Oviloo Tunnillie, *Time to Carve*, 2002, serpentinite (Kangiqsuqtaq/Korok Inlet), clock, 31.7 x 12.7 x 10.2 cm, signed with syllabics and dated 2002, Fehleley Fine Arts, Toronto. RIGHT: Andrew Qappik, *Self-Portrait in the Printshop*, 2003, drypoint, edition of 30, 35 x 40 cm, Winnipeg Art Gallery.



# OVILOO TUNNILLIE

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Oviloo's portraits of herself as an artist express a range of emotions, from deep contemplation, physical exertion, and pride to the elation resulting from creative actions, as in her exuberant self-portrait *Time to Carve*, 2002. She explained, "This is me! I have a stone to carve and I usually start working in the morning. The sculpture is about time. The clock is in a round ball, which is the world. The clock and the world and the time to go by."<sup>2</sup> In this sculpture, Oviloo excitedly holds a piece of stone aloft and humorously incorporates the face of an actual clock into her stone composition.



# OVILOO TUNNILLIE

Life & Work by Darlene Coward Wight

## ATAATA (FATHER) 2002



Oviloo Tunnillie, *Ataata (Father)*, 2002  
Serpentinite (source unknown), 40.4 x 22.4 x 29.6 cm  
Unsigned  
Collection of John and Joyce Price



Many of Oviloo Tunnillie's carvings include members of her family, and particularly her beloved father, Toonoo (1920-1969), who inspired her early interest in carving. *Ataata (Father)* is one of only a few portraits Oviloo made that shows Toonoo alone. It presents the viewer with an image that conveys the artist's deep affection for her father and his formative influence on her work. In the sculpture, Toonoo, who was known for his carvings of this domestic necessity, is shown carving a qulliq, a traditional stone lamp that burns rendered animal fat to give light and heat to dwellings.

Oviloo's portraits of her father seem to reflect the quiet, gentle nature that has been attributed to him by commentators such as Jimmy Manning and Terry Ryan of the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative.<sup>1</sup> Oviloo uses a particularly colourful stone, with rose and tan streaks, for this tranquil carving inspired by a photograph she had of her father: "There is a photo of my father like that, carving a kudlik (qulliq) in stone. It stays in my mind."<sup>2</sup> Three years earlier, in 1999, Oviloo had carved a different qulliq, that one being used to heat a pan for cooking bannock. The carving was featured on a poster commemorating the formation of the territory of Nunavut that year.



Oviloo Tunnillie, *Bannock Cooking on Qulliq*, 1999, serpentine (Kangiisquutaq/Korok Inlet), metal grill, wood; base, 22.5 x 39.8 x 23.8 cm; pan, 6.5 x 27.0 x 17.7 cm; tarqut, 15.6 cm; assembled, 29.5 cm high, signed with syllabics and dated 1999, collection of John and Joyce Price.

*Ataata (Father)* was included in the 2002 exhibition *Toonoo's Legacy* organized by Feheley Fine Arts in Toronto and was probably inspired by the theme of the exhibition. The show featured art works spanning three generations: by Toonoo; Oviloo's mother, Sheokjuke (1928-2012); Oviloo herself; her brothers Jutai (1959-2015) and Sam Toonoo (1969-2017); and her three sons, Tytoosie (b.1974), Noah (b.1976), and Etidloi (b.1982) Tunnillie.

The sculpture was made when the family was living in Toronto, and the exhibition catalogue gives insights into the work they were doing at that time. Pat Feheley explains: "Today Oviloo is the matriarch of a large and busy family, transplanted to Toronto for the past year. She enjoys the longer working hours for outdoor sculpting in the southern environment." Oviloo commented to Feheley that the only thing she missed about Cape Dorset was getting country food from her relatives.<sup>3</sup>



# OVILOO TUNNILLIE

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Oviloo's comments obscure the struggles the family experienced during their time in the South. The reduced market for Inuit art following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in New York City made it more difficult for Oviloo to support her family. The sculptures of her father that Oviloo created for the exhibition organized by Feheley, *Ataata (Father)* and *On My Father's Shoulders*, 2002, show the continuity of her artistic vision through this challenging time.



# OVILOO TUNNILLIE

Life & Work by Darlene Coward Wight

## TIRED WOMAN 2008



Oviloo Tunnillie, *Tired Woman*, 2008  
Serpentine (Kangia), 39.4 x 21.6 x 19.1 cm  
Signed with syllabics  
Collection of Gail and Jerry Korpan





The masterful sculpture *Tired Woman* has fatigue as its main theme—all elements of the composition express this concept. The woman is clad in a soft, culturally unspecific robe, and her long, textured hair flows down her back. Her eyes are closed as she lays her head on a pillow that she holds to her chest. She sits on an uncarved piece of stone, indicating that she is taking a rest from carving. She has no time for more than a quick break, although the woman is clearly exhausted.

Oviloo Tunnillie created this work after her first diagnosis of ovarian cancer and the subsequent chemotherapy treatments, around 2005. The cancer was in remission for a time, but she often mentioned feeling tired. She kept working until a second diagnosis in approximately 2012, following which she was no longer able to work.<sup>1</sup>

This carving draws particular attention to the artist's skill in creating from hard stone the illusion of soft, flowing garments and malleability—for example, of the pillow that she pulls to her chest. The soft elements contrast with the rough, uncarved stone upon which she sits. As expressed by Robert Kardosh: "[This is] a work of profound stillness. *Tired Woman* seems to speak of hardship generally, and of mundane exhaustion. But it is not incidental to the meaning that this is an image of a woman, too, and of the effect of work on a woman's body."<sup>2</sup>

This sculpture is comparable to another 2008 self-portrait, *Woman Carving Stone*, in which the activity of carving is more specific. The artist's right arm hangs at her side with an axe in her hand. The reference is to the hard physical labour of using a hand tool. Her upper body and head are bent over a large piece of raw stone. Again, the body language of the figure speaks more expressively than words of the ravages of disease upon the artist's body.



# SIGNIFICANCE & CRITICAL ISSUES

Oviloo Tunnillie (1949–2014) was one of very few female Inuit stone carvers to achieve international success. Her decision at a young age to become a stone sculptor was an indication of her independence from artistic conventions, not only in Cape Dorset (“Kinngait” in Inuktitut), but in Canada as a whole. She created pioneering art that broke barriers with her highly personal work depicting her experiences, and her “meditations on womanhood” changed expectations about Inuit art.

**She was also the first Inuit stone carver to repeatedly create the nude female form. By exploring stark social realities and deep emotional expression, Oviloo both served as a role model for younger artists and addressed the devastating effects of colonialism on life and communities in the North.**

#### STONE CARVING IN CAPE DORSET

Stone carving was first encouraged in Cape Dorset in 1951 by James Houston (1921–2005), a young artist who had previously made buying trips to Nunavik (Quebec) camps near the present-day communities of Inukjuak (1949 and 1950) and Puvirnituq (1950). He purchased Inuit handicrafts for the Canadian Handicrafts Guild in Montreal, and the guild sold these items in annual sales held each autumn after they had been shipped to the city. Previously, most carving by Inuit for trade had been small in scale in the medium of ivory. Houston encouraged the use of stone instead of ivory, and stone carvings on offer in the November 1949 and 1950 sales caught the attention of buyers and the media.<sup>1</sup>



James Houston measuring a piece of soapstone, Cape Dorset, Nunavut, 1960, photographer Rosemary Gilliat Eaton.

Houston expressed his interest in turning his attention to Baffin Island, and a federal government grant to the guild financed his trip there with his new wife, Alma. They arrived in the Cape Dorset area in the spring of 1951. A few people from the camps in the region, such as Osuitok Ipeelee (1923–2005), were well known for their ivory carving, and there too Houston interested them in turning their talents to stone carving.

The Houstons remained in the Dorset area to work with the artistic male carvers and female seamstresses.<sup>2</sup> By the mid-1950s the first of several deposits of attractive green serpentinite stone had been located. Increasing volumes of carvings were purchased and shipped to southern markets by the guild and the Hudson's Bay Company. Oviloo Tunnillie's father, Toonoo (1920–1969), was one of those who took advantage of this new economic opportunity to support their families.



A few women did create carvings from time to time, including Kenojuak Ashevak (1927–2013), who created works like *Mother and Children*, c.1967. But it was graphic art, not carving, that brought them to national and international attention. This trend has continued to the present day. Oviloo remains one of the few female carvers to have been associated with the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative's activities.



LEFT: Kenojuak Ashevak, *Mother and Children*, c.1967, stone, 39 x 25.5 x 21 cm, unsigned, Government of Nunavut Fine Art Collection; on long-term loan to the Winnipeg Art Gallery. RIGHT: Mary Qayuaryuk (Kudjuakjuk), *Bird Spirit*, c. mid-1960s, stone, 21.1 x 16.3 x 14.4 cm, private collection.

Oviloo Tunnillie made her first carving, *Mother and Child*, in 1966, when she still lived with her family several miles from the community of Cape Dorset. Her father exchanged the carving for goods available at a nearby Hudson's Bay fur trading post. However, Oviloo did not become a full-time carver until she and her husband moved to Cape Dorset in 1972. By that time, the establishment of the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative in 1961 and the Arctic co-operative's southern marketing agency, Canadian Arctic Producers (CAP), in 1965 had resulted in carving becoming an important livelihood for many Inuit in the area. The formation of the Co-op's Toronto division, Dorset Fine Arts (DFA), in 1978 further expanded its marketing efforts.

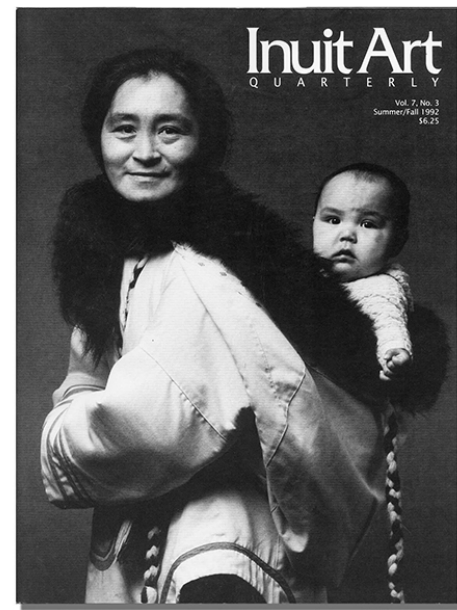
The Hudson's Bay Company store in Cape Dorset purchased lower-priced work from carvers. Oviloo, however, sold her carvings to the Co-op. They were then shipped to CAP and later DFA, which found ready markets with commercial galleries that often included Oviloo's work in group and solo exhibitions. John Westren began working at the DFA wholesale showroom in 1984: "I was always thrilled when I was unpacking her works. . . . We tried to get those opened first because it was such a thrill to see something other than dancing bears and other common themes."<sup>3</sup> It was through a solo show at the Marion Scott Gallery in Vancouver in 1992 that the first sale of Oviloo's work (*This Has Touched My Life*, 1991–92) was made to a public institution.

When Oviloo moved to the South with her family in the early twenty-first century, the Co-op would ship stone to Toronto and Montreal for Oviloo to carve, and although she continued to sell pieces through DFA during this period, she also sold directly to galleries in the city.

**"WOMEN ARE CARVERS NOW"**

Oviloo Tunnillie is one of few women to have gained national recognition as a stone carver in Canada. While it was not uncommon for women to take up carving, particularly in communities less focused on graphic art, it was men whose work gained widespread attention. Indeed, other than Oviloo, only Lucy Tasseor Tutsweetok (1934–2012) has cultivated a significant reputation with international audiences. In many ways, Oviloo's art can be seen through a feminist lens. She was aware that her interest in carving differed from normal social roles within her Inuit culture, but she never wavered in her non-traditional role of a female sculptor. She has explained:

At one time, when I was younger, I was shy, almost embarrassed to carve. If a woman was a carver it was a very unusual thing. People would see it as man's work, but today the woman has to be recognized more. Women are homemakers and mothers, but also women are carvers now. I want women to be strong, to try and use their talents.<sup>4</sup>



Oviloo's role as a mother was always important to her, and she would represent her maternal relationships in carvings, blending the two aspects of her identity. For example, in 2000, she carved *Self-Portrait with Daughter Alasua in 1972*, depicting herself with her oldest daughter as an infant in her amautik (parka). She holds an axe in one hand and a piece of carving stone in the other. A photograph of Oviloo "packing" (or carrying) Alasua's daughter, Tye, whom Oviloo adopted, in her amautik, taken by Canadian photographer Jerry Riley in 1990, was used on the cover of an issue of *Inuit Art Quarterly* in 1992. In 2002, Oviloo created a sculpture showing herself and a twelve-year-old Tye proudly holding the framed photograph by Riley (*Oviloo and Granddaughter Tye Holding Photo by Jerry Riley*).

LEFT: Oviloo Tunnillie, *Oviloo and Granddaughter Tye Holding Photo by Jerry Riley*, 2002, serpentine (Kangisquutaq/Korok Inlet), 34.5 x 29.2 x 16.0 cm, signed with syllabics, collection of John and Joyce Price. RIGHT: Cover of *Inuit Art Quarterly* (Summer/Fall 1992) featuring Oviloo Tunnillie and granddaughter Tye, 1990, photograph by Jerry Riley.

In sculptures Oviloo acknowledged women family members who were also artistic: her mother, Sheokjoke (1928–2012), in the self-portrait *Woman Showing a Drawing*, 2006; and her husband's grandmother, Ikayukta Tunnillie (1911–1980), in *Ikayukta Bringing Drawings to the Co-op*, 2002, and *Ikayukta Tunnillie Carrying Her Drawings to the Co-op*, 1997. Even her sister Nuvalinga appears in *My Sister Nuvalinga Playing Accordion*, 2005. Despite some similarities with late work by graphic artist Napachie Pootoogook (1938–2002),<sup>5</sup> this degree of specificity about family and relationships has been rare in art by Inuit.

Many of Oviloo's female figures are even more unconventional. They wear culturally unspecific robes, or they are nude. Oviloo is the first Inuit stone carver to repeatedly create the nude female form, in works such as *Woman in High Heels*, 1987. In 1992, Oviloo stated, "My favourite work is on Taleelayu—women figures."<sup>6</sup> Her depictions of the sea spirit Taleelayu, or Sedna, are strong, voluptuously nude women with whale flukes instead of legs. They were not inspired by a desire to tell the sea spirit's story but are expressive presentations of the female body. In *Diving Sedna*, 1994, wet hair flows sensuously around full breasts.

Other sculptures by Oviloo draw on everyday experiences of the body, such as *Nature's Call*, 2002, which depicts a woman on a toilet with her pants around her ankles. *Untitled (Masturbating Woman)*, 1975, expresses a frankness toward sexuality that is seldom seen in the work of Inuit artists. Thomassie Kudluk (1910–1989), a carver from Kangirsuk, Nunavik, became known for his humorously sexual carvings in the 1970s, but drawings by Inuit women have more frequently been the means to express intimate subject matter.



Oviloo Tunnillie, *Sea Spirit*, 1993, serpentinite, quartz crystals (Kangiisquutaq/Korok Inlet), 44.4 x 25.4 x 22.9 cm, signed with syllabics, collection of Jamie Cameron and Christopher Bredt.



LEFT: Annie Pootoogook, *Woman at Her Mirror (Playboy Pose)*, 2003, coloured pencil and ink on paper, 66 x 51 cm, collection of John and Joyce Price. RIGHT: Oviloo Tunnillie, *Untitled (Masturbating Woman)*, 1975, serpentinite (Tatsiituq), 12.7 x 15.9 x 20.3 cm, Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto.

In recent years, Shuvinai Ashoona (b.1961) has become known internationally for her uniquely surreal, sometimes sexual imagery on large sheets of paper. Napachie Pootoogook's work from the 1990s explored themes seldom seen in Inuit art: eroticism, domestic violence, and gender relations. Annie



Pootoogook (1969–2016) also used the more personal medium of drawing on paper to express an unvarnished portrait of modern-day life in Cape Dorset. Oviloo and Annie have served as role models for a younger generation of artists, such as Jamasie Pitseolak (b.1968), to address personal themes involving sexual abuse and modern technology.

### TUBERCULOSIS AND THE TREATMENT OF INUIT PATIENTS

Oviloo Tunnillie's carved memories from the three years she was in southern hospitals in the 1950s form a powerful personalized account of the colonial treatment of Inuit and other Indigenous people at that time. So-called Indian hospitals were racially segregated facilities used to isolate Indigenous tuberculosis (TB) patients because of a fear among health officials that "Indian TB" posed a danger to the non-Indigenous population.

Oviloo's work became increasingly autobiographical in the 1990s. This shift was heralded by a major sculptural grouping of figures, *This Has Touched My Life*, 1991–92, which reveals a memory from her time at Clearwater Lake Sanatorium, near The Pas, Manitoba. While at the hospital, she was taken by automobile to see two women whose faces were covered by veils, as was fashionable in the 1950s. She had no idea why or where she was going. Her description of this experience reveals that it was quite surreal for her:



LEFT: Interior view of Clearwater Lake Sanatorium, The Pas, Manitoba, September 1950, photograph by the Canadian Department of National Defence. RIGHT: Oviloo Tunnillie, *Self-Portrait at Manitoba Hospital (Holding Teddy Bear)*, 2010, serpentinite (Kangia), 58.4 x 20.3 x 14.0 cm, signed with syllabics, collection of Jamie Cameron and Christopher Bredt.



When I saw these two, I really noticed the way they were dressed and their faces were hidden. Well, I could see them but they were unrecognizable as they wore hats that had lace pulled down in front of their faces and they each had purses. . . . [H]aving seen them like this has been most memorable for me. I have not met any white person such as these two yet. I wonder sometimes if they were ashamed of their faces because I've never seen that before.<sup>7</sup>

Several of her other hospital works, such as *Nurse with Crying Child*, 2001, and *Self-Portrait at Manitoba Hospital (Holding Teddy Bear)*, 2010, are poignant self-portraits. A third hospital piece, *Oviloo in Hospital Bed*, c.2000, is more wrenching in its raw emotion, as Oviloo screams while tied to her hospital bed.

In 1945 the federal Department of National Health and Welfare took over the building and running of hospitals. From the nineteenth century onward, Inuit populations had been afflicted by various diseases brought by European settlers and missionaries. Tuberculosis moved slowly, but by 1950 increasing numbers of people became infected with the highly contagious bacterium. The federal government began a large-scale operation to reduce the occurrence of

the disease in northern populations, run under the auspices of the Advisory Committee for the Control and Prevention of Tuberculosis among Indians. This included surveys of infection as well as forcible removal and confinement of those infected. The federal government made the choice not to build hospitals in the North but to evacuate infected individuals to the south of Canada and invest in facilities there.<sup>8</sup>



Oviloo Tunnillie, *Oviloo in Hospital Bed*, c.2000, serpentine (Kangiqsuqutaq/Korok Inlet), 18.8 x 9.3 x 23.8 cm, signed with syllabics, The Terry Ryan Collection, Toronto.

Part of the national operation were ships dedicated to carrying TB-infected passengers from northern Canada to southern sanatoriums. One such ship was the *C.D. Howe*, which ran from 1950 to 1969. It was specially fitted after 1946 with medical facilities quarantined away from crew quarters.<sup>9</sup> The ships were equipped with X-ray technology to diagnose infections, and patients were marked on the hand with identifying numbers and the results of their tests.<sup>10</sup>

Children, even infants, who were diagnosed with TB would be taken from their parents and sent to the South. Men and women were forced to leave their families behind. In 1953, the Indian Act was amended to include the Indian Health Regulations that made it a crime for an Indigenous person to refuse treatment or to leave a hospital before being discharged.<sup>11</sup>



LEFT: Miss Ann Webster, RN, at the autoclave in the operating room aboard the *C.D. Howe*, c.1956, photographer unknown. RIGHT: Inuit boarding the *C.D. Howe*, July 1951, photographer Wilfred Doucette.



Inuit evacuees were sent to hospitals with staff who did not speak Inuktitut. Patients who were treated by strict bedrest were sometimes tied to their beds, as in the sculpture *Oviloo in Hospital Bed*, c.2000. Oviloo also suffered sexual abuse while in the hospital. In 1993 she powerfully expressed the theme of a helpless, violated woman in a small carving, *Nude (Female Exploitation)*. Typically for the artist, expressive hands communicate her inner emotional state: one to her groin and another to her anguished face. The work was referenced by Oviloo to Adrienne Clarkson in 1997:



Oviloo Tunnillie, *Nude (Female Exploitation)*, 1993, serpentinite (Kangiqsuqutag/Korok Inlet), 7.8 x 35.8 x 13.8 cm, signed with syllabics, private collection.



This one has to do with child molestation. I have gone through that experience with medical personnel when I was a little girl. Even though it wasn't actual rape, I was violated sexually. We know that doctors can do anything with your body. And myself when I was a little girl, doctors worked with me but not all doctors are good. I've had an experience with doctors that did what they shouldn't have been doing, so that's the meaning behind this carving—that it shouldn't be this way.<sup>12</sup>

In the 1950s tuberculosis treatment began to change from months and years of bedrest to lung surgery and finally to antimicrobial medications. Provincial sanatoriums emptied as outpatient treatment became the norm. However, treatment for Indigenous patients was different. They were kept in hospitals for years as they were not considered capable of managing their recovery at home as were non-Indigenous patients.<sup>13</sup> Many Indigenous patients died and were buried near treatment facilities without any notice sent to their families informing them of their deaths.<sup>14</sup> Cape Dorset artist Pitloosie Saila (b.1942) was kept in southern hospitals from 1950 to 1957.<sup>15</sup> Unlike Oviloo, Pitloosie and other artists with similar experiences did not represent those in their artwork.

### SLAUGHTER OF SLED DOGS

Social issues reflective of colonial attitudes recur in Oviloo's work, from relationships with southern communities to policies that profoundly affected Inuit life in the North. One issue that emerged in Oviloo's sculptures early on was the slaughter of qimmiit, or sled dogs, which occurred on Baffin Island and in Nunavik from the mid-1950s to the late 1960s. For example, Oviloo's sculpture *Protecting the Dogs*, 2002, reveals her knowledge and concern about the slaughter of sled dogs in south Baffin Island. According to her husband, Iyola Tunnillie, this work depicts a man known in Cape Dorset for trying to protect his sled dogs from being shot.<sup>16</sup>



LEFT: Oviloo Tunnillie, *Protecting the Dogs*, 2002, serpentine (Kangia), 15 x 31 x 26 cm, signed with syllabics, collection of the Canada Council Art Bank, Ottawa. RIGHT: Dog team pulling a sled, c.1949, photograph by Richard Harrington.

For generations, Inuit and their sled dogs lived and hunted together. Dogs provided the only means of transportation in winter and on land in summer. Their other uses were vital: they sniffed out seal holes and avoided ice cracks in fog and darkness. During blizzards, dogs could track scents to follow paths. They could surround polar bears for the hunter's spear or rifle or ward them off, as in Oviloo's carving *Dog and Bear*, 1977.

Dogs were the only animals Inuit named individually. Children were given puppies to raise, and young Inuit boys, once they had a small team of their own, were taken seriously as men.<sup>17</sup> Dogs were an important part of Oviloo's life and she always had them as pets.<sup>18</sup> They were part of Oviloo's family group in the sculpture *Family*, 2006. They are the main subject in the complex composition *Dogs Fighting*, c.1975.

The slaughter of sled dogs took place over twenty years. They were killed at different times by different people, mainly the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. A range of different reasons motivated the killings (e.g., fear of diseases such as distemper), but the main effect was to prevent Inuit from keeping dogs when they were living in places where there were many qallunaat (non-Inuit). It remains a particularly painful and controversial topic for Inuit. It was the subject of a report published by the Qikiqtani Inuit Association in 2014,<sup>19</sup> as well as a 2010 documentary film, *Qimmit: A Clash of Two Truths*, directed by Joëlle Sanguya and Ole Gjerstad.<sup>20</sup>



Oviloo Tunnillie, *Family*, 2006, serpentine, 53.5 x 35 x 24 cm, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Québec City.

## SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Oviloo Tunnillie clearly recognizes the effects of colonization, and her critiques of alcoholism are as pointed as when she references the displacement of tuberculosis patients and the eradication of sled dogs.

In 1980 Oviloo carved *Thought Creates Meaning*, a surprising composition inveighing against the evils of alcohol and its effects on Inuit:

The hand represents the grip of drink on Inuit. . . . Inuit were given alcohol by the government. The hand, which is a symbol of Inuit, is pointing a finger at the government official. No one in particular, but qallunaat [non-Inuit]. You will notice the man isn't wearing kamiit [skin boots] because the person's white. . . . The liquor was brought up by the white people, not by Inuit. This was my thought at the time. I disliked alcohol for what it can do to people.<sup>21</sup>



LEFT: Oviloo Tunnillie, *Woman Passed Out*, 1987, serpentinite (Kangiqsuqutaq/Korok Inlet), 48 x 28 x 25 cm, unsigned, Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau. RIGHT: Oviloo Tunnillie, *Thought Creates Meaning*, 1980, serpentinite (Tatsiitug), 41 x 35 x 15 cm, unsigned, Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau.

Another powerful sculpture, *Woman Passed Out*, 1987, reveals the artist's concern about alcohol abuse, as well as its disastrous effect on a vulnerable woman:

This is a drunken person that tempted the others to drink more. This person is passed out, because the alcohol can make you do anything, like this one. A woman doesn't mean to be the way she is here . . . but it happens after she has had too much to drink.<sup>22</sup>

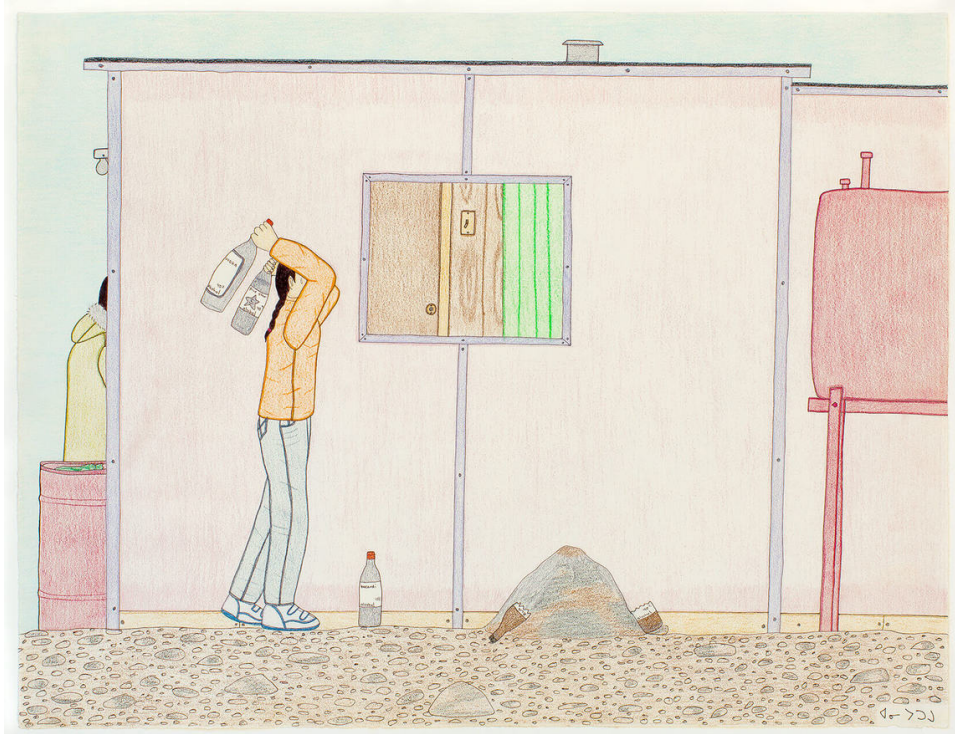


In the 1997 television episode “Women’s Work: Inuit Women Artists” of *Adrienne Clarkson Presents*, Oviloo commented further:

And this carving I did, I know that you shouldn’t be treating a woman this way and this man had been drinking with this woman. The woman is helpless.<sup>23</sup>

Oviloo’s forceful commentary on the issue of substance abuse is unconventional for an Inuit artist. Rare examples by other artists are Annie Pootoogook’s drawing *Memory of My Life: Breaking*

*Bottles*, 2001–2 and Manasie Akpaliapik’s (b.1955) 1991 sculpture *Untitled* that appeared on the cover of *Inuit Art Quarterly* in 1993. His carving was of a man’s head shattered by an embedded bottle of alcohol.<sup>24</sup> Oviloo dealt with the debilitating effects of alcoholism in her own extended family, which was possibly related to the murder of her father and the suicide of her daughter as well as of her niece, the daughter of her sister Nuvalinga. Substance abuse and suicide are the two most serious social concerns in Inuit communities today.



Annie Pootoogook, *Memory of My Life: Breaking Bottles*, 2001–2, colour pencil, graphite and ink on paper, 50.8 x 66 cm, collection of Stephanie Comer and Rob Craigie.

## REVELATIONS OF GRIEF

Few of Oviloo Tunnillie’s contemporary Inuit artists addressed inner emotional states and grief, which made her work unique. Other artists of her era—for example, Osuitok Ipeelee (1923–2005) and Kiugak Ashoona (1933–2014)—most typically favoured depictions of Arctic animals, domestic and hunting scenes, the sea spirit Taleelayu, shamanic transformations, and episodes from well-known legends and stories.

Human figures were impersonally dressed in culturally explicit fur clothing and were engaged in activities relating to pre-settlement living. Depictions of single human figures were rare and unemotionally engaged in an implied activity. Women were usually shown in their maternal roles with a child or children. The deep emotional expression conveyed in Oviloo's work, as in such sculptures as *Repentance*, 2001, transcends the cultural or traditional while also speaking deeply to the artist's own experiences.

The tragic episode of the death of her beloved father, Toonoo, must have contributed to Oviloo's several self-portraits of grieving women. In 1969 Toonoo was shot to death by Mikkigak Kingwatsiak, the husband of Toonoo's daughter Nuvalinga, in what was believed at the time to be a hunting accident. This shock re-emerged twenty-five years later when Mikkigak confessed to murdering Toonoo.<sup>25</sup> Grief at her father's death is the subject of *Oviloo and Toonoo*, 2004, in which the memory of him appears as a small figure that seems to be trying to reach his weeping daughter from a distance.

In her work, Oviloo also addressed the suicide, in 1997, of her thirteen-year-old daughter, Komajuk. Mental anguish is expressed in a number of Oviloo's sculptures from this date on, beginning with *Grieving Woman*, 1997. In 2000, she created a nude and vulnerable *Crying Woman*, her face buried in arms folded on knees drawn up into herself. In both of these, covered faces cut the figures off emotionally from the outside world and create focused images of isolation and sadness.

The unorthodox expression of inner states of mind was also a powerful feature of the graphic art and sculpture of Oviloo's brother Jutai Toonoo (1959-2015), who may have been influenced by his sister. Both artists uniquely created human forms and figures devoid of a narrative context. Jutai's non-narrative images of human heads and figures, such as *Paranoid*, 2012, are deeply personal and often portray restless sleep or dreamlike states. A bipolar disorder influenced his fierce independence from conventional subjects. Both he and Oviloo created their unique imagery in a community that had deep roots in culturally specific and narrative art forms.



Oviloo Tunnillie, *Oviloo and Toonoo*, 2004, serpentinite (Kangiqsuqutaq/Korok Inlet), 22.2 x 20.3 x 24.1 cm, signed with syllabics, collection of Barry Appleton.



LEFT: Oviloo Tunnillie, *Woman Covering Her Face*, 2000, stone, 37.2 x 14.6 x 7 cm, collection of Jane Ross. RIGHT: Jutai Toonoo, *Paranoid*, 2012, graphite, coloured pencils on paper, 50 x 65 cm, Winnipeg Art Gallery.





# STYLE & TECHNIQUE

Oviloo Tunnillie (1949–2014) began her carving career in 1972. Although few of her works from the 1970s are documented, they were naturalistic depictions of wildlife, particularly birds and dogs, completed with an axe and file. In 1988 she began carving with electric tools, creating detailed scenes that drew from her own life as well as subjects seen on television. Often featuring strongly rendered female figures, her sculptures confront the nature of her materials, embrace the possibility of abstraction, and demonstrate the capacity of stone carving to capture feelings of separation, loss, personal struggle, and the joys of life.

## TOOLS

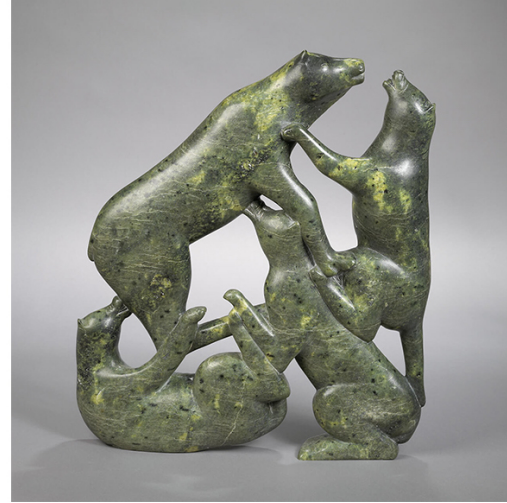
Oviloo Tunnillie's earliest carving is *Mother and Child*, created in 1966.

The serpentinite stone came from a large deposit located near her family's camp at Kangia on south Baffin Island. Ovilo noted that this first work, as well as her carvings from the early 1970s, was made with an axe and file, the tools of her carver father, Toonoo (1920-1969).<sup>1</sup> For an Owl carved in 1974, she remembered using an axe on the body and sandpaper to shape the feathers on the wings.<sup>2</sup>

As an inexperienced carver who had been selling her carvings sporadically for only two years, Ovilo would have manipulated these hand tools with much physical strength and patience. *Dogs Fighting*, c.1975, shows how quickly Ovilo's skill progressed—where *Owl* is quite blocky, the later work is intricate, and the form conveys the movement of dogs' bodies.

By the early 1980s some other Inuit carvers used electric tools that enabled them to create sculptures with less effort.<sup>3</sup> As explained by Ohito Ashoona (b.1952), "We use power tools so we won't damage our arms. With hand tools, you see dents because the stone is cracked or chipped. With power tools, the work can be very smooth and polished. I can still carve using hand tools, but the power tools seem better."<sup>4</sup> While Ovilo embraced this new way of working a few years later, others including master carver Osuitok Ipeelee (1923-2005) continued to use tools such as an axe, saw, and files.<sup>5</sup>

The process of creating a carving, from the carver's initial rough shaping of the stone to the final stages of finishing and polishing the piece, involves a series of mechanical and artistic choices. An artist must develop not only the physical ability to manipulate the tools needed to work in stone but also a nuanced understanding of what each tool can do.



LEFT: Ovilo Tunnillie, *Owl*, 1974, serpentinite (Tatsiitug), 18.4 x 6.1 x 5.7 cm, unsigned, Winnipeg Art Gallery. RIGHT: Ovilo Tunnillie, *Dogs Fighting*, c.1975, serpentinite (source unknown), 43.3 x 38.9 x 4 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.



LEFT: Close-up of Oviloo Tunnillie carving, 1992, photograph by Jerry Riley. RIGHT: Oviloo Tunnillie, *Self-Portrait with Carving Stone*, 1998, serpentine (Kangiisquutaq/Korok Inlet), 53.0 x 37.5 x 33.3 cm, signed with syllabics, collection of Fred and Mary Widding.

In an interview in 1998 with curators Susan Gustavison and Pamela Brooks, Oviloo explained how she created her carvings and the roles played by different tools at different stages of the process:

[I used to use] an axe and a file . . . but ever since I had the operation on my arm, I have been using grinders or electric tools. . . . At first I use an electric chisel. After I've used the electric chisel, I use the grinder . . . [then] I use a Dremel [electric drill] to do the finishing. After I am done with all those things, I start using a file, and also I start working with a chisel. After I've done with the filing and the chisel, I start sanding.

I have to use four different grits of sandpaper. I start from the roughest to the smoothest. . . . Because the electric tools which I use aren't meant for small pieces, they are heavy. My arm does get tired when I'm using those electric tools. . . . I used to use wax on a few carvings but there's fine grit [sandpaper] such as 1500. Although there's 1500, I would like to get to 2000 grit. Because it would [make the surface] even shinier.<sup>6</sup>

Oviloo used the different tools at her disposal to create variations in form and texture in her work, from the textured hair of *Tired Woman*, 2008, to the realistic feathers of her bird carvings from the 1980s. She depicted her own carving process in works such as *Self-Portrait with Carving Stone*, 1998, which shows the artist holding a piece of stone that is waiting to be carved. She had



become so confident in her technical abilities that her artistry and command over the stone resulted in work that made use of notably simpler forms. Nonetheless, they are able to communicate the universal within the particular and reveal hidden meaning.



LEFT: Oviloo Tunnillie using an electric grinder. Film still from the 1993 documentary *Keeping Our Stories Alive: The Sculpture of Canada's Inuit*. RIGHT: Oviloo Tunnillie using an electric grinder. Film still from *Adrienne Clarkson Presents, "Women's Work: Inuit Women Artists,"* November 12, 1997.

## MATERIALS

Oviloo Tunnillie and other Cape Dorset ("Kinngait" in Inuktitut) carvers have most regularly chosen serpentinite for their carvings. Often, the carving stone used by Inuit artists is described as "soapstone," but soapstone, more accurately identified as steatite, contains a high proportion of the mineral talc, making it very soft. Many artists find steatite too soft for carving. Serpentinite is a harder rock consisting of serpentine-group minerals that are commonly green, greenish yellow, or greenish grey and veined or spotted with red, green, and white.<sup>7</sup>

Iyola Tunnillie, Oviloo's husband, mined Oviloo's serpentinite stone from a number of sites, including Kangia; Itilliaqujuq (also spelled Itidliajuk), located one mile from Igalalik; Kangiqsuqutaq at Korok Inlet; Tatsiituq, which was also the site of a camp; Kadlusivik; and Aqiatulaulavik, the location of an early camp.<sup>8</sup> The carving stone was distinct in each of these deposits, and Iyola is able to distinguish each by examining photographs of the sculptures. Most of these sites were eventually depleted, and the stone used today usually comes from a large quarry at Korok Inlet. Knowledge of stone types is often useful in identifying and dating south Baffin Island carvings.



A crew of Iqaluit carvers at a Korok Inlet quarry, 2011, photographer unknown.

In addition to serpentinite, another very different material is used in several sculptures by Oviloo. An artist (it is not known who) visiting Cape Dorset stimulated her interest in working with crystals, and she began to use them in her work.<sup>9</sup> *Beautiful Woman*, 1993, for example, depicts a young woman seated, Buddha-like, with a high-heeled shoe peeking out from under the edge of her full skirt. She holds a large quartz crystal in her hand like a sceptre and wears a tiara studded with more crystals inserted like diamonds.

Iyola noted that Oviloo would find crystals in a creek near their house in Cape Dorset: "Right after the snow had melted we would see all these little pebbles."<sup>10</sup> The larger crystals were chipped out of stone found in the lower pit of Kangiqsuqutaq mine at Korok Inlet. Another sculpture with prominent quartz crystals is *Sea Spirit*, 1993, in which one large crystal adorns the forehead of the sea spirit and her hands hold two others.<sup>11</sup>



LEFT: Oviloo Tunnillie, *Sedna*, 2007, serpentinite (Kangiqsuqutaq/Korok Inlet), 29.8 x 16.5 x 16.5 cm, signed with syllabics, collection of Gail and Jerry Korpan. RIGHT: Oviloo Tunnillie, *Woman Thinking*, 1996, serpentinite (Kangiqsuqutaq/Korok Inlet), 35.6 x 40.6 x 20.3 cm, signed with syllabics and dated 1996, collection of Jamie Cameron and Christopher Bredt.

Gallerist Robert Kardosh has commented that, rather than releasing a form contained in a piece of stone, Oviloo relied on her materials as constraints that helped her work through her ideas. Oviloo commented, on several occasions, about the challenge of conceptualizing her sculptures:

It can be very difficult to sculpt the idea that you have in your mind. If your idea doesn't match the shape of the stone your idea may have to change because you have to accept what is available in the rock.<sup>12</sup>



Carving involves mental as well as physical effort, and the two are combined in the execution of the work. Oviloo spoke about this in an interview in 1998 when asked about her *Woman Thinking*, 1996:

In that piece . . . I have come to the point where I don't know what to make. It has taken me at least three days, on a few occasions, to figure out what I'm going to make. After I have imagined what I'm going to be working on, I start working on the stone. I don't draw on paper what I'm going to be making. Only after I know what to make, do I start working on the soapstone.<sup>13</sup>

Several of Oviloo's most emotive sculptures express the mental strain of carving through the body language of her figures. In *Woman Thinking*, 1996, Oviloo is seated with clasped hands pressed to her bowed head. Her raw material is the subject of the artist's deep contemplation in *Woman Carving Stone*, 2008. Her upper body and head are bent over a large piece of stone, expressing fatigue and the immense physical effort she will need to carve it.



Oviloo Tunnillie, *Woman Carving Stone*, 2008, serpentinite (Kangiqsuqutaq/Korok Inlet), 44.4 x 26.7 x 11.4 cm, signed with syllabics, collection of Barry Appleton.

## REALISM AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Realism in Oviloo Tunnillie's work is present not only in the form and details of her subjects but also in the attitude her work takes vis-à-vis both the artist's past and her everyday life. She was one of very few Inuit carvers to extend her approach to realism into detailed autobiography. A work from 1991-92, *This Has Touched My Life*, is a realistic depiction of a memory from her years in southern sanatoriums and was among the first of many autobiographical pieces. The humorous work *Nature's Call*, 2002, is an example of Oviloo's unhesitant and forthright depiction of the human body and bodily functions.

In the 1970s and 1980s Oviloo created elegantly naturalistic animal compositions, particularly of dogs and birds, depicting them with great attention to naturalistic detail. In *Dogs Fighting*, c.1975, several animals interact and form a complex composition that expresses their frenzied movement. Oviloo also carved realistic birds in her earlier years. These were usually hawks, as in *Hawk Landed*, c.1989, and *Hawk Taking Off*, c.1987. In the former piece, Oviloo's appreciation for the qualities of the stone is apparent. Details such as feather patterning and claws are carefully defined. In an interview in 1991 she explained her enjoyment of carving birds:



LEFT: Oviloo Tunnillie, *Hawk Landed*, c.1989, serpentinite (Kangiqsuqutaq/Korok Inlet), 12 x 34.5 x 29.2 cm, signed with syllabics, Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau.



RIGHT: Kananginak Pootoogook, *Hawk Prepares for Attack*, 1992, stonecut and stencil on paper, 50.7 x 68.5 cm, edition of 50, collection of the Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau.



With my carvings right now the bird is my favourite subject to carve. The things that are simple in detail. . . . Right now, I like carving birds with wings spread out. I like to carve the stone very thin on the wings. When I do this, a lot of the stone comes off because I try to take the bulk of the weight off. . . . I try to carve a bird that has a flow to it. . . . I find a great joy when the stone starts to take a shape.<sup>14</sup>

While there are many Cape Dorset sculptors whose works are famous for their detailed depictions of Arctic wildlife, Oviloo's degree of precision can best be compared with the art of Kananginak Pootoogook (1935–2010), who has been described as the "Audubon of the Arctic." For Oviloo's two hawks from c.1987 and c.1989, it is possible to distinguish their specific species—the rough-legged hawk.

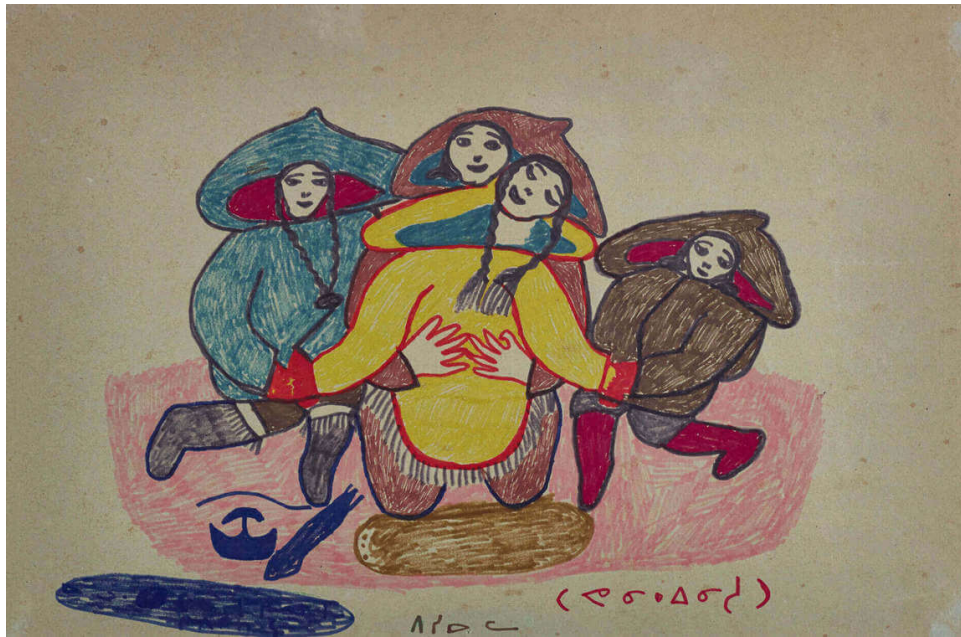
In another work, *Dog Chasing Bear*, 1977, the determined pursuit of the dog and the bear's panicked attempt to escape are palpable. Here, the attention to realism is in the context the scene alludes to as well as in the details of its subject. Dogs were an important source of protection for people in camps on the land. A pack of dogs could also circle and trap a polar bear, making it vulnerable to the spear or rifle of a hunter. In keeping with Oviloo's later approach to scenes from her own life, in this piece she uses a key moment to suggest a much larger narrative.



Oviloo Tunnillie, *Dog and Bear*, 1977, serpentinite (Kangiisquutaq/Korok Inlet), 23.0 x 21.8 x 12.2 cm, unsigned, Canada Council Art Bank, Ottawa.

In 1997 Oviloo gave a succinct summary of her art and her subjects: "They are personal experiences that I've had and that's why I like creating them. My carvings are what I've seen, what I've experienced."<sup>15</sup> On another occasion she noted, "Some people write about their lives but I carve about my life. That is the way I want to be known."<sup>16</sup>

By the 1990s, when autobiography had become a defining factor in Oviloo's art, she included a degree of narrative, particularly for her "hospital" works. At the time Oviloo was carving, only a few Inuit artists included autobiography in their work. Graphic artist Pitseolak Ashoona (1904-1983) and her daughter Napachie Pootoogook (1938-2002), for example, show women in a social context in which they are defined by the roles of wife and mother. However, over the course of her career, Oviloo's sculptures became increasingly less narrative, focusing on an individual subject without necessarily suggesting a larger context or story, as in *Self-Portrait with Carving Stone*, 1998.



Pitseolak Ashoona, drawing for print *Memories of Childbirth*, 1976, coloured felt-tip pen on paper, 24.1 x 35.6 cm, collection of the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative Ltd., on loan to the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario.

Oviloo's autobiographical carvings are usually single figures that carry the meaning of her memories and self-reflections. The delightful *Self-Portrait on a Sled in 1959*, 1998, was a memory from 1959: "That's the first time I started sliding. Using a sled like that."<sup>17</sup> A later memory, *Self-Portrait (Arriving in Toronto)*, 2002, shows Oviloo with a suitcase as she arrives at the Toronto airport in 2000 or 2001. Her short-sleeved dress reflects her landing in a new, southern culture, but there are no elements to suggest what she is doing there or how long she might stay. It seems to indicate her initial excitement and anticipation of an urban lifestyle that was a dramatic contrast to life in Cape Dorset. As is often the case, Oviloo expresses a state of mind through clothing and hair.



Oviloo Tunnillie, *Self-Portrait on Sled in 1959*, 1998, serpentinite (Kangiqsuqutaq/Korok Inlet), 23.5 x 41.9 x 20.3 cm, signed with syllabics and dated 1998, collection of Jamie Cameron and Christopher Bredt.

### ABSTRACTION—THE ROBED FIGURES

From the 1990s on, Oviloo Tunnillie created a series of solitary female figures clothed in robelike garments that drape and flow over curvaceous bodies, as well as sculptures that show nude female subjects. With these figures, the artist often eschews the detail that can be seen in her realistic works and imbues the sculptures with an abstracted emotion. Culturally unspecific, the clothing does not detract from the expressive body language of the figures. Hair also contributes to the strong general impression of sensuous femininity. It is usually long and flowing, as in *Woman with Long Hair*, c.1994, and is often the only part of a sculpture with textured surface detailing. Just as the short, bobbed haircut and bangs represent Oviloo's hospital years, as seen in *Nurse with Crying Child*, 2001, so the cascade of beautiful hair is expressive of mature womanhood.





LEFT: Oviloo Tunnillie, *Woman with Long Hair*, c.1994, serpentinite (Kangisugatak/Korok Inlet), 43.2 x 30.5 x 14.2 cm, signed with syllabics, Lois and Daniel Miller Collection. RIGHT: Oviloo Tunnillie, *Woman with Pot*, 2001, serpentinite (Kangisugataq/Korok Inlet), 16.5 x 10.2 x 17.8 cm, signed with syllabics, collection of John and Joyce Price.

Robert Kardosh, director of Marion Scott Gallery, Vancouver, has aptly described Oviloo's sculptures as "emotional portraits" that express psychology over narration.<sup>18</sup> Oviloo's later self-portraits, such as *Woman Thinking*, 2002, are defined by what they feel, not by the role the figure plays in society. In fact, for works such as *Repentance*, 2001, or *Woman with Pot*, 2001, viewers may wonder if they are seeing work by an Inuit artist, as Oviloo's sculpture crosses cultural lines. Her smooth, undulating forms in the polished stone often come close to abstraction. There is very little detailing apart from the powerful language of the human body.

In these figures, the facial expression is not important and is often covered by hands that reveal sorrow or contemplation. In *Diving Sedna*, 1994, for example, the figure's face is hidden, giving prominence to the rest of the body, while in *Crying Woman*, 2000, a nude figure cradles her head in her arms, which rest on her drawn-up knees, curling into herself mentally and physically. It is an image of complete introspection and vulnerability.

As indicated by the title of the last Marion Scott Gallery exhibition of Oviloo's work in 2008, *Transcending the Particular*, her sculpture eventually moved away from the details of southern culture that intrigued her earlier, such as the party dress of *Beautiful Woman*, 1993, and subjects from popular culture that she viewed on television, such as *Football Player*, 1981. Oviloo's generalized female subjects, such as *Grieving Woman*, 1997, exude the emotions of the human condition that transcend gender and culture. Few carvers have been able to accomplish the abstraction of pure emotion through cold, hard stone.



# OVILOO TUNNILLIE

Life & Work by Darlene Coward Wight



Oviloo Tunnillie, *Beautiful Woman*, 1993, serpentinite (Kangiqsuqtaq/Korok Inlet), quartz crystals (Cree Kugala Creek), 36.8 x 40 x 20.3 cm, signed with syllabics, Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia, Vancouver.



The works of Oviloo Tunnillie are held in public and private collections in Canada and internationally. Although the following institutions hold the works listed, they may not always be on view. This list contains only the works held in public collections discussed and illustrated in this book; many other works by Oviloo Tunnillie may be found in public collections across Canada.





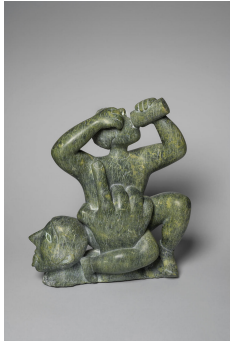
# OVILOO TUNNILLIE

Life & Work by Darlene Coward Wight

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## CANADIAN MUSEUM OF HISTORY

100 Laurier Street  
Gatineau, Quebec, Canada  
819-776-7000  
historymuseum.ca



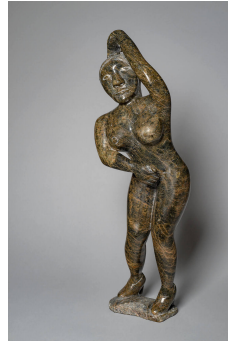
**Oviloo Tunnillie, *Thought Creates Meaning*, 1980**  
Serpentine (Tatsiitug)  
41 x 35 x 15 cm

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**Oviloo Tunnillie, *Hawk Taking Off*, c.1987**  
Serpentine  
(Kangiisuqutaq/Korok Inlet)  
17.4 x 72 x 38 cm

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**Oviloo Tunnillie, *Woman in High Heels*, 1987**  
Serpentine  
(Kangiisuqutaq/Korok Inlet)  
67 x 20.5 x 15 cm

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**Oviloo Tunnillie, *Woman Passed Out*, 1987**  
Serpentine  
(Kangiisuqutaq/Korok Inlet)  
48 x 28 x 25 cm

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**Oviloo Tunnillie, *Hawk Landed*, c.1989**  
Serpentine  
(Kangiisuqutaq/Korok Inlet)  
12 x 34.5 x 29.2 cm

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**Oviloo Tunnillie, *My Mother and Myself*, 1990**  
Serpentine  
(Kangiisuqutaq/Korok Inlet)  
23.3 x 20.5 x 9.8 cm

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**Oviloo Tunnillie, *This Has Touched My Life*, 1991-92**  
Serpentine (Tatsiitug)  
Woman, 16.7 x 9.5 x 7 cm; woman and child, 16.5 x 19.2 x 10.5 cm; man, 18.5 x 9 x 5.25 cm; car, 3 x 9.2 x 4.2 cm

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# OVILOO TUNNILLIE

Life & Work by Darlene Coward Wight

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## COLLECTION OF THE CANADA COUNCIL ART BANK

921 St. Laurent Boulevard  
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada  
1-800-263-5588 ext. 4479  
artbank.ca



**Oviloo Tunnillie, *Dog and Bear*, 1977**

Serpentine  
(Kangiisuqutaq/Korok Inlet)  
23.0 x 21.8 x 12.2 cm, unsigned



**Oviloo Tunnillie, *Protecting the Dogs*, 2002**

Serpentine (Kangia)  
15 x 31 x 26 cm

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## FEHELEY FINE ARTS

65 George Street  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada  
416-323-1373  
feheleyfinearts.com



**Oviloo Tunnillie, *Untitled (Masturbating Woman)*, 1975**

Serpentine (Tatsiitug)  
12.7 x 15.9 x 20.3 cm



**Oviloo Tunnillie, *Self-Portrait with Daughter Alasua in 1972*, 2000**

Serpentine  
(Kangiisuqutaq/Korok Inlet)  
40.6 x 45.7 x 19.1 cm



**Oviloo Tunnillie, *Nature's Call*, 2002**

Serpentine  
(Kangiisuqutaq/Korok Inlet)  
28.6 x 17.8 x 17.8 cm



**Oviloo Tunnillie, *Time to Carve*, 2002**

Serpentine  
(Kangiisuqutaq/Korok Inlet), clock  
31.7 x 12.7 x 10.2 cm

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# OVILOO TUNNILLIE

Life & Work by Darlene Coward Wight

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## LA GUILDE

1356 rue Sherbrooke Ouest  
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**Oviloo Tunnillie, *Man and Bear*,  
1974-76**  
Cast bronze  
4.4 x 3.8 x 1.9 cm

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## MUSÉE NATIONAL DES BEAUX-ARTS DU QUÉBEC

179 Grande Allée Ouest  
Québec City, Québec, Canada  
418-643-2150  
mnbaq.org



**Oviloo Tunnillie, *Family*, 2006**  
Serpentinite  
53.5 x 35 x 24 cm

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# OVILOO TUNNILLIE

Life & Work by Darlene Coward Wight

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## MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY, THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

6393 NW Marine Drive  
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada  
604-827-5932  
moa.ubc.ca

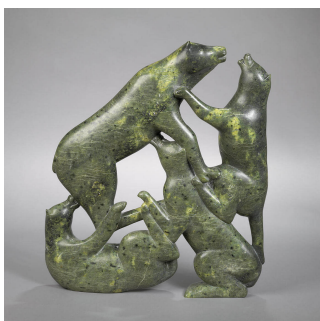


**Oviloo Tunnillie, *Beautiful Woman*, 1993**  
Serpentinite  
(Kangiqsuqutaq/Korok Inlet),  
quartz crystals (Cree Kugala  
Creek)  
36.8 x 40 x 20.3 cm

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## NATIONAL GALLERY OF CANADA

380 Sussex Drive  
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada  
613-990-1985  
gallery.ca



**Oviloo Tunnillie, *Dogs Fighting*, c.1975**  
Serpentinite (source  
unknown)  
43.3 x 38.9 x 4 cm



**Oviloo Tunnillie, *Skier*, 1993**  
Serpentinite (source  
unknown)  
30 x 31 x 44 cm



**Oviloo Tunnillie, *Diving Sedna*, 1994**  
Marble (Andrew  
Gordon Bay)  
68 x 14 x 38 cm



# OVILOO TUNNILLIE

Life & Work by Darlene Coward Wight

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## WINNIPEG ART GALLERY

300 Memorial Boulevard  
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada  
204-786-6641  
wag.ca



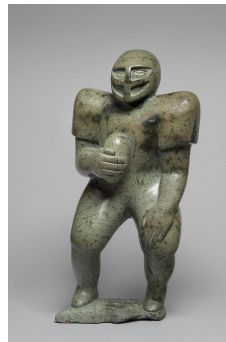
**Oviloo Tunnillie,**  
***Mother and Child*, 1966**  
Serpentinite (Kangia)  
43 x 24 x 17 cm

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**Oviloo Tunnillie, Owl,**  
**1974**  
Serpentinite (Tatsiitug)  
18.4 x 6.1 x 5.7 cm

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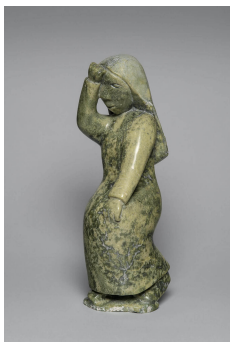
**Oviloo Tunnillie,**  
***Football Player*, 1981**  
Serpentinite (Tatsiitug)  
52 x 29 x 17 cm

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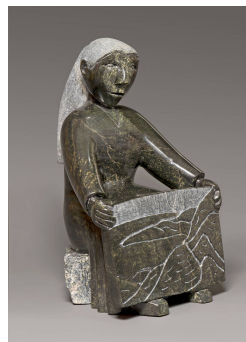
**Oviloo Tunnillie, Bird**  
***Woman*, 1990s**  
Serpentinite  
30.2 x 42.8 x 13.3 cm

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**Oviloo Tunnillie,**  
***Grieving Woman*, 1997**  
Serpentinite (Tatsiitug)  
35 x 12.5 x 11.3 cm

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**Oviloo Tunnillie,**  
***Woman Showing a***  
***Drawing*, 2006**  
Serpentinite  
(Kangihsuqutaq/Korok  
Inlet)  
40.0 x 25.4 x 27.9 cm

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## NOTES

### BIOGRAPHY

1. Nuvalinga Kingwatsiak, interview with the author, Cape Dorset, February 18, 2016.
2. The Hudson's Bay Company purchased carvings from people in the south Baffin Island region, and the Baffin Trading Company had a post near Cape Dorset from 1939 until about 1946. For further information about carving in the Cape Dorset area in this early period, see Darlene Coward Wight, *Early Masters: Inuit Sculpture, 1949-1955* (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 2008).
3. Gimpel Fils Gallery, *Eskimo Carvings: Coronation Exhibition* (London: Gimpel Fils Gallery, May 1953).
4. Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, *Canadian Eskimo Art*, foreword by Jean Lesage, design and layout by James A. Houston (Ottawa: Edmond Cloutier, Queen's Printer, 1954), 15, 30.
5. For further information, see Wight, *Early Masters*, 169-71.
6. Kingwatsiak, interview, 2016.
7. *Adrienne Clarkson Presents*, season 8, episode 19, "Women's Work: Inuit Women Artists," aired November 12, 1997, on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 14:23.
8. As there was no hospital in Ninga, Manitoba, this reference is unclear. We do know that Oviloo spent much of her time in the Clearwater Lake Indian Hospital.
9. "Ovilu Tunnillie," in *Inuit Women Artists: Voices from Cape Dorset*, ed. Odette Leroux, Marion E. Jackson, and Minnie Aodla Freeman (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1994), 223-24.
10. Leroux, Jackson, and Freeman, "Ovilu Tunnillie," 223-24.
11. Leroux, Jackson, and Freeman, "Ovilu Tunnillie," 224.
12. Leroux, Jackson, and Freeman, "Ovilu Tunnillie," 225.
13. Oviloo Tunnillie, quoted in *Oviloo Tunnillie* (Vancouver: Marion Scott Gallery, 1994), unpaginated.
14. Leroux, Jackson, and Freeman, "Ovilu Tunnillie," 225.
15. Kingwatsiak, interview, 2016.
16. Leroux, Jackson, and Freeman, "Ovilu Tunnillie," 224-25.





17. Patricia Feheley, *Toonoo's Legacy* (Toronto: Feheley Fine Arts, 2002), unpaginated.
18. *Adrienne Clarkson Presents*, 14:23-18:39. Oviloo did not mention the nature of the advice given to her by Ikayukta.
19. According to Nuvalinga, Toonoo and Sheokjuka had moved their family into the Cape Dorset area in 1959 or 1960: "I don't know the actual reason but it did somewhat disturb me that although our parents did not want to move, they were forced to along with everybody else who was living in their area. We were among the last people to move. Many families were pretty much forced to move to this area." However, she did clarify that even though they moved closer to Cape Dorset, they were still scattered in family groups, perhaps a mile or two apart. (Kingwatsiak, interview with the author, 2016.)
20. Adoption has a long and important cultural history in Inuit communities. An intrinsic part of kinship systems, Inuit adoption customs foster resilient communities while attending to the needs of children and families. For an overview, see <https://www.bcadoption.com/resources/articles/perspectives-inuit-custom-adoption>.
21. Alasua has the name Kigotaluk in early disc lists for the Cape Dorset area. "Eskimo disc numbers" were an identification system implemented by the Government of Canada from 1941 to 1978. Prior to colonization Inuit children were given their name by community elders; there was no need for family names. The arrival of trade outposts, missionaries, and enforced settlements, the Government of Canada created the disc system as a means of record keeping and census gathering. The implementation of the disc system and the subsequent erasure of each Inuk's own name has had a lasting, generational impact.
22. Leroux, Jackson, and Freeman, "Ovilu Tunnillie," 225.
23. Penny Williams, "Cape Dorset Carvers: New Generations, New Visions," *Above & Beyond* 10, no. 1 (Winter 1998): 44.
24. Leslie Boyd Ryan, *Cape Dorset Prints: A Retrospective; Fifty Years of Printmaking at the Kinngait Studios* (Portland, OR: Pomegranate Communications Inc., 2007), 116-18.
25. Terry Ryan in Ryan, *Cape Dorset Prints*, 116-18.
26. Virginia J. Watt and Deborah Feinstein, "Cape Dorset Jewellery Project," press release by the Canadian Guild of Crafts, 1976.
27. Susan Gustavison, *Northern Rock: Contemporary Inuit Stone Sculpture* (Kleinburg, ON: McMichael Canadian Art Collection, 1999).
28. Judy Scott Kardosh, foreword to *Women of the North: An Exhibition of Art by Inuit Women of the Canadian Arctic* (Vancouver: Marion Scott Gallery, 1992).



29. Kardosh, foreword.

30. Marion Scott Gallery exhibitions were in 1994, 1995, 1996, 2006, and 2008.

31. Oviloo Tunnillie, interview with Peter Millard, interpreter Jimmy Manning, *Inuit Art Quarterly* 7, no. 3 (1992): 18-21, 36-39; Peter Millard, "Meditations on Womanhood: Oviloo Tunnillie," *Inuit Art Quarterly* 9, no. 4 (1994): 20-25.

32. Robin Laurence, "Janus Face Off," *Border Crossings* 15, no. 4, 60 (1996): 65-70. Laurence contributed another important article to *Border Crossings* several years later: "Airplanes, Figure-Skaters, Football Players and High-Heeled Shoes: Oviloo Tunnillie and the Tradition of the New," *Border Crossings* 28, no. 1, 109 (2009): 65-70.

33. Oviloo Tunnillie, "Women's Work," *Adrienne Clarkson Presents*, 00:57.

34. This treatment proved effective, and Etidloi now manages his psychiatric condition with medication in Cape Dorset, as was the case for his uncle Jutai Toonoo. (Iyola Tunnillie, interview with the author, Cape Dorset, February 17, 2016.) Sadly, Jutai's younger brother, Sam Toonoo, was not as fortunate and he passed away in 2017.

35. John Westren, interview with the author, Toronto, November 17, 2015.

36. Details about this film are unavailable at this time.

37. Robert Kardosh's introductory essay to the catalogue also appeared in the fall 2009 issue of *Inuit Art Quarterly*. See Robert Kardosh, "Transcending the Particular: Feminist Vision in the Sculpture of Oviloo Tunnillie," *Inuit Art Quarterly* 24, no. 3 (Fall 2009): 24-33.

### KEY WORKS: MOTHER AND CHILD

1. "Oviloo Tunnillie," in *Inuit Women Artists: Voices from Cape Dorset*, ed. Odette Leroux, Marion E. Jackson, and Minnie Aodla Freeman (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1994), 224-25.

2. Nuvalinga Kingwatsiak, interview with the author, Cape Dorset, February 18, 2016.

3. Leroux, Jackson, and Freeman, "Oviloo Tunnillie," 225.

4. Marnie Schreiber, conversation with Oviloo Tunnillie, Toronto, April 29, 2013. Schreiber purchased *Owl* in 2013 and gifted it to the Winnipeg Art Gallery after its inclusion in the gallery's exhibition *Oviloo Tunnillie: A Woman's Story in Stone* (2016).

### KEY WORKS: DOGS FIGHTING

1. "Oviloo Tunnillie," in *Inuit Women Artists: Voices from Cape Dorset*, ed. Odette Leroux, Marion E. Jackson, and Minnie Aodla Freeman (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1994), 227.



### KEY WORKS: FOOTBALL PLAYER

1. A second football player is in the collection of La Guilde, Montreal.
2. "Ovilu Tunnillie," in *Inuit Women Artists: Voices from Cape Dorset*, ed. Odette Leroux, Marion E. Jackson, and Minnie Aodla Freeman (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1994), 230.
3. Iyola Tunnillie, interview with the author, Cape Dorset, February 17, 2016.
4. Iyola Tunnillie, interview, 2016.
5. INAC later became the Department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, which was split into two departments in December 2017: the Department of Indigenous Services and the Department of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs.
6. Leroux, Jackson, and Freeman, "Ovilu Tunnillie," 230.

### KEY WORKS: WOMAN IN HIGH HEELS

1. Patricia Feheley, *Dorset Magic: Four Decades of Sculpture from Cape Dorset* (Toronto: Feheley Fine Arts, 1999), unpaginated.
2. "Ovilu Tunnillie," in *Inuit Women Artists: Voices from Cape Dorset*, ed. Odette Leroux, Marion E. Jackson, and Minnie Aodla Freeman (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1994), 234.
3. Norman Vorano, "Inuit Men, Erotic Art," *Inuit Art Quarterly* 23, no. 3 (Fall 2008): 18-27.

### KEY WORKS: THIS HAS TOUCHED MY LIFE

1. Marion Scott Gallery, *Women of the North* (Vancouver: Marion Scott Gallery), 1992.
2. "Ovilu Tunnillie," in *Inuit Women Artists: Voices from Cape Dorset*, ed. Odette Leroux, Marion E. Jackson, and Minnie Aodla Freeman (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1994), 239.
3. Nuvalinga Kingwatsiak, interview with the author, Cape Dorset, February 18, 2016.
4. Leroux, Jackson, and Freeman, "Ovilu Tunnillie," 224.

### KEY WORKS: SKIER

1. Oviloo Tunnillie, unpublished interview with Christine Lalonde, Cape Dorset, June 17, 1994.
2. Robert Kardosh, introduction to *Oviloo Tunnillie* (Vancouver: Marion Scott Gallery, 1994).





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3. Oviloo Tunnillie, unpublished interview with Susan Gustavison and Pamela Brooks, Cape Dorset, December 13, 1998.

## KEY WORKS: DIVING SEDNA

1. "Ovilu Tunnillie," in *Inuit Women Artists: Voices from Cape Dorset*, ed. Odette Leroux, Marion E. Jackson, and Minnie Aodla Freeman (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1994), 232.
2. Leroux, Jackson, and Freeman, "Ovilu Tunnillie," in *Inuit Women Artists*, 220–39.
3. Oviloo Tunnillie, unpublished interview with Christine Lalonde, Cape Dorset, June 17, 1994.
4. Leroux, Jackson, and Freeman, "Ovilu Tunnillie," in *Inuit Women Artists: Voices from Cape Dorset*, 231–32.

## KEY WORKS: IKAYUKTA TUNNILLIE CARRYING HER DRAWINGS TO THE CO-OP

1. *Adrienne Clarkson Presents*, season 8, episode 19, "Women's Work: Inuit Women Artists," aired November 12, 1997, on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 41:00.
2. Telephone interview with Robert Kardosh, June 2008, as referenced in Robert Kardosh, "Transcending the Particular: Feminist Vision in the Sculpture of Oviloo Tunnillie," *Inuit Art Quarterly* 24, no. 3 (Fall 2009): 24–33.

## KEY WORKS: SELF-PORTRAIT WITH CARVING STONE

1. Oviloo Tunnillie, interview with Susan Gustavison and Pamela Brooks, Cape Dorset, December 13, 1998.
2. Patricia Feheley, *Dorset Magic: Four Decades of Sculpture from Cape Dorset* (Toronto: Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto, 1999), unpaginated.

## KEY WORKS: ATAATA (FATHER)

1. Michelle Lewin, "Toonoo's Legacy: Three Generations of Artists in the Family of Oviloo Tunnillie," *Inuit Art Quarterly* 18, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2003): 12–17.
2. Patricia Feheley, *Toonoo's Legacy* (Toronto: Feheley Fine Arts, 2002), unpaginated.
3. Feheley, *Toonoo's Legacy*.

## KEY WORKS: TIRED WOMAN

1. John Westren, interview with the author, Toronto, November 17, 2015.
2. Robert Kardosh, "Transcending the Particular: Feminist Vision in the Sculpture of Oviloo Tunnillie," in *Oviloo Tunnillie: Meditations on Womanhood* (Vancouver: Marion Scott Gallery, 2008), unpaginated.



### SIGNIFICANCE & CRITICAL ISSUES

1. Darlene Coward Wight, "The Handicrafts Experiment, 1949-53," in *The First Passionate Collector* (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1990), 44-92.
2. For a fuller history of the early years of carving for export in the Canadian Arctic, see Darlene Coward Wight, *Early Masters: Inuit Sculpture, 1949-1955* (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 2006).
3. John Westren, interview with the author, Toronto, November 17, 2015.
4. Oviloo Tunnillie, quoted in *Oviloo Tunnillie* (Vancouver: Marion Scott Gallery, 1994), unpaginated.
5. Leslie Boyd Ryan and Darlene Coward Wight, *Napachie Pootoogook* (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 2004).
6. "Ovilu Tunnillie," in *Inuit Women Artists: Voices from Cape Dorset*, ed. Odette Leroux, Marion E. Jackson, and Minnie Aodla Freeman (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1994), 232.
7. Written by Oviloo Tunnillie in February 1992, with additional material from interviews with Marion E. Jackson and Odette Leroux. See Leroux, Jackson, and Freeman, "Ovilu Tunnillie," 239.
8. Ebba Olofsson, Tara L. Holton, and Imaapik Jacob Partridge, "Negotiating Identities: Inuit Tuberculosis Evacuees in the 1940s-1950s," *Etudes/Inuit/Studies* 32, no. 2 (2008): 127-49.
9. Pat S. Grygier, *A Long Way from Home: The Tuberculosis Epidemic among the Inuit* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 1997).
10. Olofsson, Holton, and Partridge, "Negotiating Identities," 127-49.
11. Maureen Lux, "Indian Hospitals in Canada," in *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, accessed March 18, 2016, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/indian-hospitals-in-canada>.
12. *Adrienne Clarkson Presents*, season 8, episode 19, "Women's Work: Inuit Women Artists," aired November 12, 1997, on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 17:00.
13. Lux, "Indian Hospitals in Canada."
14. To right historical wrongs, in 2010 the Government of Canada established a working group at the request of Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI). This interregional group is called Nanilavut, which means "let's find them" in Inuktitut. Comprehensive research has been taking place and is being recorded in a database, with the goal that Inuit would be able to contact the group and find information about loved ones who went away and never returned. NTI also expects a formal apology from the federal government and some support for



family members to visit cemeteries in the South. On January 25, 2018, former patients of Indian hospitals filed a \$1.1 billion class-action lawsuit against the federal government. They are seeking financial compensation and a formal acknowledgement of the government's negligence in the operation of Indian hospitals. For further information, see "Indian Hospitals in Canada," in *The Canadian Encyclopedia*; and Michele LeTourneau, "Federal Apology Expected to Accompany Nanilavut Launch," *Nunavut News*, March 10, 2018.

15. Susan Gustavison and Darlene Coward Wight, *Pitaloosie Saila: A Personal Journey* (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 2017).

16. Iyola Tunnillie, interview with the author, Cape Dorset, February 17, 2016.

17. Qikiqtani Truth Commission: Qikiqtani Inuit Association, "Qimmiliriniq: Inuit Sled Dogs in Qikiqtaaluk," in *Qikiqtani Truth Commission: Thematic Reports and Special Studies, 1950-1975* (Iqaluit: Inhabit Media Inc., 2014).

18. Nuvalinga Kingwatsiak, interview with the author, Cape Dorset, February 18, 2016.

19. See the Qikiqtani Truth Commission: <https://www.qtcommission.ca/>.

20. *Qimmit: A Clash of Two Truths*, directed by Joeline Sanguya and Ole Gjerstad (Montreal: National Film Board of Canada and Piksuk Media, 2010), DVD.

21. "Ovilu Tunnillie," in *Inuit Women Artists: Voices from Cape Dorset*, ed. Odette Leroux, Marion E. Jackson, and Minnie Aodla Freeman (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1994), 229.

22. Leroux, Jackson, and Freeman, "Ovilu Tunnillie," 235.

23. *Adrienne Clarkson Presents*, 45:00.

24. *Inuit Art Quarterly* 8, no. 4 (Winter 1993): front cover.

25. Patricia Feheley, *Toonoo's Legacy* (Toronto: Feheley Fine Arts, 2002), unpaginated.

### STYLE & TECHNIQUE

1. "Ovilu Tunnillie," in *Inuit Women Artists: Voices from Cape Dorset*, ed. Odette Leroux, Marion E. Jackson, and Minnie Aodla Freeman (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1994), 225.

2. Marnie Schreiber, conversation with Oviloo Tunnillie, Toronto, April 29, 2013.

3. Iyola Tunnillie, interview with the author, Cape Dorset, February 17, 2016.

4. Penny Williams, "Cape Dorset Carvers: New Generations, New Visions," *Above & Beyond* 10, no. 1 (Winter 1998): 45.





5. Susan Gustavison, *Northern Rock: Contemporary Inuit Stone Sculpture* (Kleinburg, ON: McMichael Canadian Art Collection, 1999), 64.
6. Oviloo Tunnillie, unpublished interview with Susan Gustavison and Pamela Brooks, Cape Dorset, December 13, 1998.
7. See Robert Rainbird and Carolyn Anglin in Gustavison, *Northern Rock*, 34-41.
8. Iyola Tunnillie, interview, 2016.
9. John Westren, interview with the author, Toronto, November 17, 2015.
10. Iyola Tunnillie, interview, 2016.
11. Though seldom incorporated into the work of Inuit carvers, the use of quartz crystals in the Arctic has been identified as early as in the Arctic Small Tool Tradition (ASTt) in the earliest of Palaeoeskimo times, 3900 to 3100 BP. A Saqqaq culture archaeological site on an island off West Greenland contains evidence that quartz crystals were used as microblades. David Morrison and Jean-Luc Pilon, eds., *Threads of Arctic Prehistory: Papers in Honour of William E. Taylor, Jr*, Archaeological Survey of Canada, Mercury Series Paper 149 (Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1994), 226.
12. Patricia Feheley, *Dorset Magic: Four Decades of Sculpture from Cape Dorset* (Toronto: Feheley Fine Arts, 1999), unpaginated.
13. Oviloo Tunnillie, interview with Gustavison and Brooks, 1998.
14. Leroux, Jackson, and Freeman, "Ovilu Tunnillie," 233, 237.
15. *Adrienne Clarkson Presents*, season 8, episode 19, "Women's Work: Inuit Women Artists," aired November 12, 1997, on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 14:23-18:39.
16. Sandra Martin, "Carving a North-South Connection," *Globe and Mail*, November 3, 2001.
17. Oviloo Tunnillie, interview with Gustavison and Brooks, 1998.
18. Robert Kardosh, "Transcending the Particular: Feminist Vision in the Sculpture of Oviloo Tunnillie," in *Oviloo Tunnillie: Meditations on Womanhood* (Vancouver: Marion Scott Gallery, 2008).



### GLOSSARY

**Arnaktauyok, Germaine (Igloodik, b.1946)**

Germaine Arnaktauyok's prints and drawings incorporate Inuit myths and traditional life, often featuring scenes of birth and motherhood. Occasionally autobiographical, her images have addressed her seven childhood years in residential schools. A graduate of the University of Manitoba (fine art) and of Algonquin College (commercial art), she is also a writer who has illustrated her own work.

**Ashevak, Kenojuak (Ikirasak/Kinngait, 1927–2013)**

Born on southern Baffin Island, this graphic artist largely represented Inuit art in Canada and internationally from the 1960s onward. The recipient of numerous commissions from federal and public institutions, including Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Canada Post, and VIA Rail, her captivating images of animal and human figures are among the most recognizable in Canadian art history.

**Ashoona, Kiugak (Kinngait, 1933–2014)**

A master carver of traditional Inuit sculpture, Kiugak Ashoona received the Order of Canada in 2000 and is among the most significant figures in contemporary northern art. A second-generation Inuit artist, he was one of Pitseolak Ashoona's sons. A retrospective exhibition of his decades-long career was held at the Winnipeg Art Gallery in 2010.

**Ashoona, Ohito (Kinngait, b.1952)**

An acclaimed carver and expert hunter from Cape Dorset, Ohito Ashoona is the son of Qaqaq Ashoona. He began his artistic training at the age of twelve and in 2002 was awarded a National Aboriginal Achievement Award for his accomplishments in the visual arts.

**Ashoona, Pitseolak (Tujakjuak/Kinngait, c.1904–1983)**

A major figure in the history of Cape Dorset graphic art, Pitseolak Ashoona made well over eight thousand drawings during her twenty-five-year career. Beginning in 1960, her enormously popular, frequently autobiographical images were included in the Cape Dorset Annual Print Collection yearly. She bore seventeen children, and many became significant artists in their own right. (See *Pitseolak Ashoona: Life & Work* by Christine Lalonde.)

**Ashoona, Qaqaq (Ikirasak/Kinngait, 1928–1996)**

A hunter and trapper born in Ikirasak (formerly Ikerrasak), a camp on southern Baffin Island, who began carving in his mid-twenties, Qaqaq Ashoona carved his human and animal figures using only hand tools and notably worked in a local white marble. He was married to the artist Mayoreak Ashoona and was one of Pitseolak Ashoona's sons.

**Ashoona, Shuvinai (Kinngait, b.1961)**

A third-generation artist from Cape Dorset, Shuvinai Ashoona creates unconventional and imaginative graphic works that are widely collected and exhibited. Her work ranges from intensely coloured and intricate coloured-pencil drawings to boldly graphic stonecuts and monochromatic ink drawings



of simple, isolated forms. (See *Shuvina Ashoona: Life & Work* by Nancy G. Campbell.)

### **Border Crossings**

A quarterly arts and culture magazine based in Winnipeg, Manitoba, *Border Crossings* was founded in 1971. It publishes reviews, articles, interviews, and portfolios related to Canadian and international artists across all disciplines.

### **Canadian Arctic Producers**

The wholesale, art-marketing arm of Arctic Co-operatives Limited, Canadian Arctic Producers has promoted work by Inuit and Dene artists since 1965. It connects northern communities to southern markets, both in Canada and internationally, through a main office in Mississauga, Ontario. Canadian Arctic Producers is Inuit owned, and proceeds are returned to local co-ops across the Arctic.

### **La Guilde**

Alice Peck and Mary Martha (May) Phillips founded the Canadian Handicrafts Guild in Montreal in 1906 to promote craft production in Canada. Inspired by the Arts and Crafts movement, the guild held annual exhibitions at the Art Gallery of Montreal. By the 1950s the professionalization and elevation of Canadian craft to the level of art had become a major focus of its activities. The guild provided financial support to James Houston to make test purchases of Inuit art, culminating in the notable sale at the CHG's Montreal shop in November 1949 that launched recognition of Inuit art in southern markets. The organization later changed its name to the Canadian Guild of Crafts, and it is now called simply La Guilde.

### **Canadian Museum of History**

Located in Ottawa, the museum was originally founded in 1856 as a geological museum associated with the Geological Survey of Canada. Its mission later expanded to include ethnography, archaeology, and natural history. In 1968 it was split into three parts, with the ethnographic section becoming the National Museum of Man. Renamed the Canadian Museum of Civilization in 1986, in 1989 it moved to its current building, designed by Douglas Cardinal to reflect the Canadian landscape. Its most recent change of name, in 2010, to the Canadian Museum of History, reflects its current focus on the history and culture of Canada's peoples.

### **Dorset Fine Arts**

The wholesale marketing division of the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative (now Kinngait Studios), based in Toronto and established in 1978, Dorset Fine Arts makes available to an international market Inuit sculptures, drawings, and prints.

### **Feheley Fine Arts**

Founded and incorporated in 1961 by M.F. (Budd) Feheley and now run by his daughter, Pat, Feheley Fine Arts is a Toronto, Ontario, art gallery dedicated to Inuit art. Artists represented by the gallery include major twentieth-century and contemporary figures such as Kenojuak Ashevak, Shuvina Ashoona, Annie Pootoogook, and Jutai Toonoo.





### **Houston, James (Canadian, 1921–2005)**

An artist, writer, filmmaker, and civil administrator, James Houston, with his wife, Alma Houston, was instrumental in the popularization of Inuit art. After studying art in Toronto and Paris, Houston spent fourteen years in the Canadian Arctic. In 1949, working with the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, he organized the first exhibition of Inuit art in southern Canada, held in Montreal.

### ***Inuit Art Quarterly***

Published by the Inuit Art Foundation since 1986, *Inuit Art Quarterly* is a source of news and criticism related to Inuit art and artists. The magazine publishes both scholarly and popular articles and declares itself to be “dedicated to the advancement and appreciation of Inuit and circumpolar Indigenous arts.”

### **Inuit Art Section**

Inuit Art Section was a division within the former federal department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). Over time, the division acquired approximately 5,000 items for the purpose of promoting Inuit art nationally and internationally. It circulated these in travelling exhibitions until 1987, after which the collection was dispersed to cultural institutions across Canada.

### **Inuit Cultural Institute**

The ICI was established in 1974 and based in Arviat (formerly called Eskimo Point). It conducted a variety of research projects for the preservation and maintenance of Inuit cultural identity, as well as provided organizational and hosting services to other agencies. When it disbanded in 2000, the Nunavut government assumed ownership of its collection of 1,600 carvings, prints, and pieces of jewellery.

### **Inuit Galerie**

This former gallery in Mannheim, Germany, was dedicated to exhibiting and selling artwork created by Inuit artists. It staged Oviloo Tunnillie’s first two international solo exhibitions.

### **Ipeelee, Osuitok (Neeouleeutalik/Kinngait, 1923–2005)**

A carver who grew up on the land, in the 1960s Osuitok Ipeelee helped start the printmaking program at what is now Kinngait Studios. Also known as Oshaweetok “B”, he is best known for his delicate carvings of inua (caribou spirits) with long, thin legs that demonstrate his deep knowledge of his materials. Other works feature both wildlife and scenes of camp life. With Peter Pitseolak he directed the team of carvers who created the Northwest Territories Council mace in 1955.

### **Kardosh, Judy Scott (Canadian, 1939–2014)**

A prominent dealer of Inuit art, Judy Scott Kardosh was the daughter of Marion Scott and the owner and director of Marion Scott Gallery in Vancouver from her mother’s death in 1989 to the end of her life. She spearheaded a sophisticated curatorial program that challenged definitions of Inuit art and its place in a larger art world and was an early advocate of the art of Oviloo Tunnillie and other female artists from the Arctic.



### **Kardosh, Robert**

Robert Kardosh is an art dealer from Vancouver. He is the son of prominent gallerist Judy Scott Kardosh and the grandson of gallery owner Marion Scott. He is currently the director and curator of Marion Scott Gallery in Vancouver. He is the author of many articles on the work of Inuit artists.

### **Kiakshuk (Ungava Peninsula/Kinngait, 1886–1966)**

Kiakshuk was a gifted storyteller who took up drawing and printmaking in the last decade of his life. Like his stories, his artworks recount tales of the natural and spirit worlds, hunting, and domestic life. In addition to his drawings, engravings, and stencil and stonecut prints, he occasionally produced carvings.

### **Klengenberg, Elsie (Ulukhaktok, b.1946)**

Elsie Klengenberg is a graphic artist who began drawing in the 1960s. She is known for her sophisticated use of stencil technique to layer colour and tone in her prints and is one of the artists represented in *Adrienne Clarkson Presents* along with Oviloo Tunnillie. Her father, Victor Ekootak, and son, Stanley (Elongnak) Klengenberg were also graphic artists.

### **Kopapik "A" (Cape Dorset, 1923–1969)**

One of the first generation of Inuit artists who sold their work to southern markets, Kopapik was a carver, printmaker, and graphic artist especially known for his representations of birds. He was married to fellow artist Mary Qayuaryuk (Kudjuakjuk) (1908–1982).

### **Kudluk, Thomassie (Kangirsuk, 1910–1989)**

Primarily a carver, although he also produced drawings, Thomassie Kudluk was one of the first Inuit artists to produce work depicting contemporary life. His often humorous sculptures depict men and women in everyday, often erotic, situations. Known for his blunt, rough-hewn forms, he is one of the few Inuit artists to represent sexuality in his work.

### **Marion Scott Gallery**

Marion Scott Gallery, a Vancouver art gallery specializing in Inuit art, was founded by Marion Scott in 1975. Her daughter Judy Scott Kardosh assumed its directorship following Scott's death in 1989. The gallery's current director and curator is Scott's grandson Robert Kardosh. Marion Scott Gallery has been and remains an important venue for contemporary Inuit artists.

### **Meeko, Lucy (Kuujuaapik, 1929–2004)**

A multidisciplinary artist, Lucy Meeko began carving in the 1950s and became a printmaker in the 1970s. She is best known for her carvings of women and children and of domestic scenes. Her work also includes drawing, basket weaving, sewing, and the creation of wall hangings. In 1993 she was featured, along with the carver Oviloo Tunnillie, in the documentary *Keeping Our Stories Alive: The Sculpture of Canada's Inuit*.

### **Mikkigak, Qaunaq (Kinngait, b.1932)**

A graphic artist and carver, Qaunaq Mikkigak is part of a family of artists that includes her mother, Mary Qayuaryuk (Kudjuakjuk), and stepfather, Kopapik



"A", sisters Sheokjoke Toonoo and Laisa Qayuayuk, and her niece Oviloo Tunnillie. A necklace she created received a jewellery design award in 1977 for her use of indigenous materials.

### **National Gallery of Canada**

Established in 1880, the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa holds the most extensive collection of Canadian art in the country as well as works by prominent international artists. Spearheaded by the Governor General the Marquis of Lorne, the gallery was created to strengthen a specifically Canadian brand of artistic culture and identity and to build a national collection of art that would match the level of other British Empire institutions. Since 1988 the gallery has been located on Sussex Drive in a building designed by Moshe Safdie.

### **Niviaqsi (Kinngait, 1908–1959)**

Also known as Niviaksiak, Niviaqsi was a carver and a significant contributor to early print collections produced by the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative (now Kinngait Studios). He was renowned for his sculptures of bears and became one of the Co-op's first Inuit printmakers, creating blue and white stonecut and stencil prints that often combined multiple perspectives into a single work. His work is in the collections of both Canadian and international institutions, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, New York.

### **Oqutaq, Sheokjuk (Kinngait, 1920–1982)**

A carver known for his realistic style, Sheokjuk Oqutaq is famous for his depictions of birds, especially loons, although his early work includes figurative pieces. The brother of the artist Osuitok Ipeelee, Sheokjuk began working in ivory in the late 1940s, transitioning to stone in the 1950s. He continued to incorporate detailed ivory carvings into his stone works throughout his career, often carving in granite.

### **Pitseolak, Jamasie (Kinngait, b.1968)**

Jamasie Pitseolak is an Inuit artist who creates sculptures of everyday objects, including motorcycles, guitars, and tables and chairs. Rather than carve from single pieces of stone, he assembles his pieces from many individually carved components, creating collage-like works that incorporate a variety of types of coloured stone. The grandson of artist, photographer, and writer Peter Pitseolak, whom he considers his inspiration, Jamasie incorporates memory, emotion, and oral tradition into his art.

### **Pitseolak, Oopik (Kinngait, b.1946)**

A carver who began her career by helping her father-in-law, the artist Peter Pitseolak, Oopik often incorporates beadwork into her sculptures. She is the mother of contemporary Inuit artist Jamasie Pitseolak.

### **Pootoogook, Annie (Kinngait, 1969–2016)**

Annie Pootoogook was one of Canada's most prominent Inuit artists, whose non-traditional and very personal drawings and prints convey her experience of present-day life in Cape Dorset. Her extraordinarily artistic family includes her parents, Eegyvadluq and Napachie Pootoogook, and her grandmother





Pitseolak Ashoona. In 2006 Annie Pootoogook won the prestigious Sobey Art Award and in 2007 was exhibited in Germany at documenta 12.

### **Pootoogook, Kananginak (Kinngait, 1935–2010)**

One of the four carvers who helped James Houston start the print program at the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative in the 1950s, Kananginak became a prolific printmaker and graphic artist. Known for his nuanced and realistic representations of animals, especially owls, he has been called the “Audubon of the North,” but he also depicted social change in his community. The son of the important camp leader Pootoogook and uncle of the artist Annie Pootoogook, in 2017 Kananginak became the first Inuit artist to have work included in the Venice Biennale.

### **Pootoogook, Napachie (Kinngait, 1938–2002)**

Napachie Pootoogook was born in Sako, a camp on the southwest coast of Baffin Island, and took up drawing in the late 1950s alongside her mother, Pitseolak Ashoona. While her earliest prints and drawings largely depict the Inuit spirit world, from the 1970s she concentrated on more earth-bound subjects, including historical events and traditional life and customs. A series of autobiographical drawings was featured in a solo exhibition at the Winnipeg Art Gallery in 2004.

### **Puqiqnak, Uriash (Gjoa Haven, b.1946)**

Uriash Puqiqnak is a carver known for the playful forms of his figurative or animal subjects, creating work that can border on the grotesque. He is also a politician, and has served as the mayor of Gjoa Haven and as a member of the Nunavut legislature from 1999 to 2004. He works to combat forgeries of Inuit art.

### **Qayuaryuk, Mary (Kudjuakjuk) (Kinngait, 1908–1982)**

Part of the first generation of artists in Cape Dorset (Kinngait), Mary Qayuaryuk was a midwife and healer as well as a carver and printmaker: wildlife was her preferred subject, with a particular focus on owls and other birds. She lived on the land until 1966, when she moved to Cape Dorset. She worked with the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative (now Kinngait Studios) from 1966 to 1982 and was the first woman elected to the Cape Dorset Community Council. Her husband was the carver Kopapik “A” and three of her daughters—Qaunaq Mikkigak, Sheokjuke Toonoo, and Laisa Qayuaryuk—also became artists.

### **Qinnuayuak, Tikituk (Kinngait, 1908–1992)**

A graphic artist and printmaker, Tikituk Qinnuayuak was married to Lucy Qinnuayuak, who became one of the mainstays of the Cape Dorset print program from 1961 until her death in 1982.

### **Sagiatuk, Kakulu (Kinngait, b.1940)**

A graphic artist who works in a variety of media, Kakulu Sagiatuk is a daughter of the artist Ikayukta Tunnillie and was born on the Hudson’s Bay Company supply ship *Nascopie*. She describes birds, Sedna, seals, and beluga whales as her favourite subjects, and her work often includes scenes of transformation drawn from Inuit shamanic beliefs.



### **Saila, Pitaloosie (Kinngait, b.1942)**

Graphic artist Pitaloosie Saila's work ranges from realism to abstraction and includes autobiographical elements, with a focus on portraits and, less often, animals. Her drawings have been rendered into prints for every Cape Dorset annual collection since 1968. A retrospective exhibition of her prints and drawings was organized by the Winnipeg Art Gallery in 2017. Her husband was noted carver Pauta Saila.

### **Shaqu, Manumi (Kinngait, 1917–2000)**

A carver and hunter who lived on the land before eventually settling in Cape Dorset (Kinngait) in the early 1950s, Manumi Shaqu produced works depicting both people and animals. He began carving in ivory during the 1940s and later incorporated ivory, antler, and bone elements into some of his stone sculptures. He famously created a *Mother and Child* carving that was given to Princess Elizabeth by the Government of Canada at the end of her royal visit in November 1951. At that time he was known as Munameekota, or Munamee "A".

### **stonecut**

A variation on the woodcut, which uses stone rather than a block of wood to create a relief print. Stonecut printmaking originated with Inuit artists and remains largely unique to Canada's north.

### **The Burdick Gallery**

This commercial gallery was established in 1991 in Washington, DC. After closing its storefront operation, it continued as an online gallery until its owner passed away.

### **Toonoo (Kinngait, 1920–1969)**

A carver and one of the first generation of Inuit artists to sell work to southern markets, Toonoo was also the father of the artists Oviloo Tunnillie, Jutai Toonoo, and Samonie Toonoo. His work is held in the collections of institutions, including the Winnipeg Art Gallery.

### **Toonoo, Jutai (Kinngait, 1959–2015)**

A carver, graphic artist, and printmaker, Jutai Toonoo rejected traditional subjects and themes in favour of a range of subject matter, including contemporary Inuit life and social issues in his community. Known for incorporating spiritual themes and text into his graphic work, Jutai created sculptures that tended toward abstraction. The brother of artists Oviloo Tunnillie and Samonie Toonoo, he was the subject of the Radio Canada International documentary *The Rebel* in 2010.

### **Toonoo, Samonie (Sam) (Kinngait, 1969–2017)**

A sculptor who began carving realistic animals and traditional themes in his twenties, Samonie Toonoo went on to produce more abstract work that frequently addressed social issues. His sculptures depict Christianity, residential schools, suicide, and alcoholism, and his subjects range from spirits and wildlife to pop culture and technology. Frequently his imagery incorporates haunting, even frightening skulls instead of human heads.



His pieces incorporate various materials, often using white antler for faces and dark serpentinite for the bodies of his human figures. He was the brother of the artists Oviloo Tunnillie and Jutai Toonoo.

### **Toonoo, Sheokjue (Kinngait, 1928–2012)**

The daughter of artist Mary Qayuaryuk (Kudjuakjuk) and stepdaughter of artist Kopapik "A" and mother of artists Oviloo Tunnillie, Jutai Toonoo, and Samonie Toonoo, Sheokjue became a graphic artist and printmaker in the 1960s.

Although her artistic career was intermittent, she consistently produced work from 2000 until the end of her life, demonstrating her versatility in the techniques of woodcut, stencil, and etching.

### **Tunnillie, Ikayukta (Kinngait, 1911–1980)**

A printmaker and graphic artist who sold work through the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative (now Kinngait Studios), Ikayukta Tunnillie lived on the land before settling in Cape Dorset (Kinngait) in 1970. Her children include the artists Qabaroak (Kabubuwa) Tunnillie and Kakulu Sagiatak.

### **Tunnillie, Qabaroak (Kabubuwa) (Kinngait, 1928–1993)**

A carver noted for his focus on questions of form and composition, Qabaroak (Kabubuwa) Tunnillie created work depicting human and animal subjects that often showed two or more figures entwined. He was the son of the artist Ikayukta Tunnillie and the husband of the artist Tayaraq Tunnillie.

### **Tunnillie, Tayaraq (Kinngait, 1934–2015)**

A carver and graphic artist, Tayaraq Tunnillie participated in some of the earliest experiments in drawing at the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative (now Kinngait Studios) in the 1950s. Her husband was the artist Qabaroak (Kabubuwa) Tunnillie.

### **West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative (Kinngait Studios)**

Established in 1960 as a formalized organization, the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative is an artists' co-operative that houses a print shop. It markets and sells Inuit carvings and prints, in particular through its affiliate in the South, Dorset Fine Arts. Since approximately 2006 the arts and crafts sector of the co-op has been referred to as Kinngait Studios.

### **Winnipeg Art Gallery**

Established in 1912, the Winnipeg Art Gallery has the world's largest public collection of Inuit art; it displayed Inuit sculpture for the first time in December 1953, and began systematic purchases for its permanent collection in 1957. In 1960 the gallery made a serious commitment when it purchased 139 major pieces from George Swinton. Over the years, the gallery's Inuit art collection has grown to its present size of close to 13,200 works largely through the donation or purchase of large collections, including the enormous 4,000-piece Jerry Twomey Collection received in 1971. The gallery's other primary collections are dedicated to Canadian historical and contemporary art, decorative art, and contemporary Canadian photography. It has moved several times in its history but has been in its current location since 1971.





# SOURCES & RESOURCES

Oviloo Tunnillie's sculpture has been included in many group and solo exhibitions since 1979, and catalogues for several of these exhibitions are important sources for studying her work. Catalogues published by Marion Scott Gallery, Vancouver, in 1992, 1994, 1996, 1999, and 2008 include perceptive articles by Judy and Robert Kardosh. The catalogue for a group exhibition organized by the Canadian Museum of Civilization in 1994 contains valuable information from interviews with the artist. The Winnipeg Art Gallery's catalogue from 2016 is for a solo retrospective exhibition and includes information from interviews with the artist as well as her husband, sister, and granddaughter.



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In 1997 a television episode of *Adrienne Clarkson Presents* enabled viewers to see the artist at work and in discussion about her art.



Left to right: Qaunaq Mikkigak, Oviloo Tunnillie, Mayoreak Ashoona, an unidentified man, Pitaloosie Saila, Mini Aodla Freeman, Okpik Pitseolak, and Napachie Pootoogook at the opening of *Isumavut: The Artistic Expression of Nine Cape Dorset Women*, at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1994.

## SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

1981	June, <i>Oviloo Toonoo</i> , Canadian Guild of Crafts, Montreal, QC.
1988	March, <i>Oviloo Tunillie</i> , Inuit Galerie, Mannheim, Germany.
1991	June, <i>Oviloo Tunnillie</i> , Canadian Guild of Crafts, Montreal, QC.
1992	September-October, <i>Oviloo Tunnillie</i> , Inuit Galerie, Mannheim, Germany.
1993	May-June, <i>An Inuit Woman Challenges Tradition: Sculpture by Oviloo Tunnillie</i> , Burdick Gallery, Washington, DC.
1994	June-July, <i>Oviloo Tunnillie</i> , Marion Scott Gallery, Vancouver, BC.
1995	June 24-July 22, <i>Oviloo Tunnillie</i> , Marion Scott Gallery, Vancouver, BC.



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|-------------|--|
| <b>1996</b> | August, <i>Oviloo</i> , Marion Scott Gallery, Vancouver, BC.   |
| <b>1997</b> | June 27–October 26, <i>Oviloo Tunnillie</i> , Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, ON.                           |
| <b>2006</b> | August, <i>Oviloo</i> , Marion Scott Gallery, Vancouver, BC.   |
| <b>2008</b> | October–November, <i>Oviloo Tunnillie: Meditations on Womanhood</i> , Marion Scott Gallery, Vancouver, BC.   |
| <b>2016</b> | May 21–September 11, <i>Oviloo Tunnillie: A Woman's Story in Stone</i> , Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg, MB. |

## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| <b>1976</b>    | <i>Debut: Cape Dorset Jewellery</i> , Canadian Guild of Crafts, Montreal, QC.   |
| <b>1979</b>    | March–April, <i>Sculpture of the Inuit: Lorne Balshine Collection/Lou Osipov Collection/Harry Winrob Collection</i> , Surrey Art Gallery, Surrey, BC.<br><br>August–September, <i>Cape Dorset: Recent Sculpture</i> , Gallery of the Arctic, Victoria, BC.  |
| <b>1984–86</b> | February 1984–June 1986, <i>Arctic Vision: Art of the Canadian Inuit</i> , Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Canadian Arctic Producers, Ottawa, ON (touring exhibition).  |
| <b>1987–88</b> | November 1987–January 1988, <i>Inuit konst fran Kanada—sculptor och grafk</i> , Millesgården, Lidingö, Sweden.  |
| <b>1988</b>    | June–September, <i>Building on Strengths: New Inuit Art from the Collection</i> , Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg, MB.   |
| <b>1989</b>    | <i>Hermitage – 89: New Exhibitions</i> , Hermitage Museum, Leningrad, USSR.   |
| <b>1991</b>    | February–March, <i>Cape Dorset Sculpture</i> , McMaster Art Gallery, Hamilton, ON.<br><br>August 3–September 7, <i>Tunilliikkut: Kababawa, Tyara, Ashevak, Oviloo</i> (gallery unknown).  |
| <b>1992</b>    | June 6–July 11, <i>Women of the North: An Exhibition of Art by Inuit Women of the Canadian Arctic</i> , Marion Scott Gallery, Vancouver, BC.<br><br>October–November, <i>Arctic Ice: Sculptures in Marble by Artists of Cape Dorset, Northwest Territories</i> , Marion Scott Gallery, Vancouver, BC. |
| <b>1993</b>    | November–December, <i>Sculpture Inuit</i> , Canadian Guild of Crafts, Montreal, QC.   |





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- 1994–96** October 1994–March 1996, *Isumavut: The Artistic Expression of Nine Cape Dorset Women*, Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull, QC.
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- 1995** May–September, *Keeping Our Stories Alive: An Exhibition of Art and Crafts from Dene and Inuit People of Canada*, Institute of American Indian Arts Museum, Santa Fe, NM.
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- 1999** *Dorset Magic: Four Decades of Sculpture from Cape Dorset*, Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto, ON.
- November 27–December 31, *A Sculpture Exhibition of New Works by Oviloo Tunnillie and Lucy Tasseor Tutsweetok*, Marion Scott Gallery, Vancouver, BC.
- 
- 2000–1** December 2000–January 2001, *Sculpture Inuit*, Canadian Guild of Crafts, Montreal, QC.
- 
- 2002** April, *Kingait Currents: Leading Sculptors of Cape Dorset*, Inuit Gallery of Vancouver, Vancouver, BC.
- April 4–25, *Art by Women: An Investigation of Inuit Sculpture and Graphics*, Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto, ON.
- 
- 2002–3** September 28, 2002–May 18, 2003, *Terra (In)Cognita: The Arctic Collection*, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, ON.

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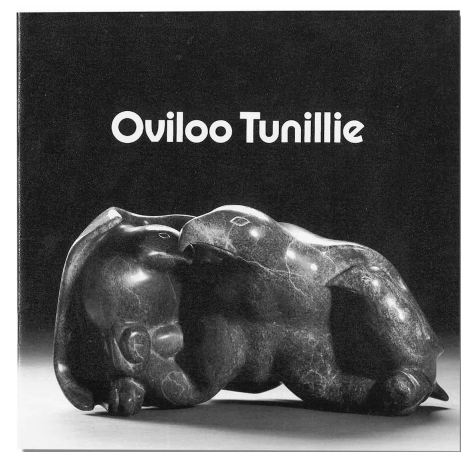
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LEFT: Exhibition catalogue for *Oviloo Tunnillie*, Marion Scott Gallery, Vancouver, 1994.  
RIGHT: Exhibition catalogue for *Oviloo Tunnillie: Meditations on Womanhood*, Marion Scott Gallery, Vancouver, 2008.





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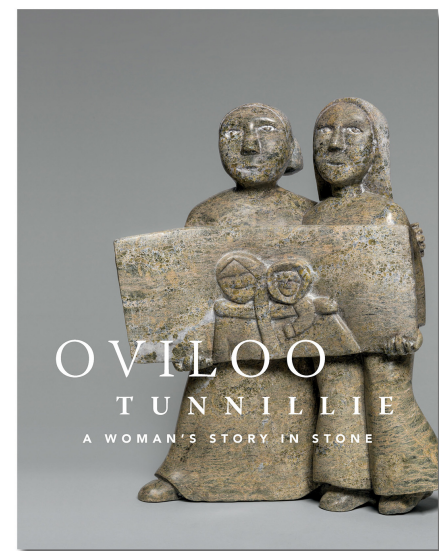
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### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

#### DR. DARLENE COWARD WIGHT

Dr. Darlene Coward Wight has researched and curated Inuit art for close to forty years. After receiving a BA (Hons) in Art History and an MA in Canadian Studies from Carleton University, she began working as the Fine Arts Curator for Canadian Arctic Producers (CAP) in 1981. CAP was the marketing agency for all Inuit-owned co-operatives across the Canadian Arctic. She made her first trip to the Arctic in 1982 to work with the carvers and co-ops in the communities of Taloyoak and Gjoa Haven. Her fascination with Inuit art, people, and culture was firmly established at that time. Over the next five years she travelled to many Arctic communities providing artistic advice to Inuit-owned co-operatives and the artists they represented. She organized numerous sales exhibitions and wrote many catalogues for art dealers internationally.

Wight has been the Curator of Inuit Art at the Winnipeg Art Gallery since 1986. In that time she has curated over ninety exhibitions and written twenty-six exhibition catalogues, as well as many smaller publications and articles. She is also the editor and major contributor for a book about contemporary Inuit art, *Creation & Transformation: Defining Moments in Inuit Art* (2012). The book received the Alexander Kennedy Isbister Award for Non-Fiction from the Manitoba Writers' Guild in April 2013. She received an honorary Doctor of Letters from the University of Manitoba in 2012.



**"Few artists have been able to accomplish the abstraction of pure emotion through cold, hard stone as Oviloo Tunnillie has. Her subjects are defined by what they feel, not what role they play in society. In fact, viewers may wonder if they are seeing work by an Inuit artist, as Oviloo's sculpture crosses cultural lines."**



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*Parts of this publication were previously published in the exhibition catalogue Oviloo Tunnillie: A Woman's Story in Stone by Darlene Coward Wight (Winnipeg Art Gallery, 2016). The Art Canada Institute gratefully acknowledges the Winnipeg Art Gallery as its Publication Partner on this book.*

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

#### From the Author

On Friday, June 13, 2014, I received an emotional telephone call from Judy Kardosh, director of Marion Scott Gallery, Vancouver, to let me know that Oviloo Tunnillie had passed away the day before, on June 12. Judy urged me to organize a retrospective exhibition of Oviloo's sculpture and told me she would help me locate many of her finest pieces. I accepted this suggestion without hesitation, but her promised assistance soon fell to her son, Robert Kardosh, as Judy herself passed away on November 30 of that same year. I would like to acknowledge the important role that Judy and Robert played in Oviloo's career.

West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative and Dorset Fine Arts were also important to Oviloo's career, and I am most appreciative of the knowledge shared with me by both John Westren and Terry Ryan. Pat Feheley and Brad van der Zanden of Feheley Fine Arts were of great assistance. In Cape Dorset, interviews were graciously provided by Iyola Tunnillie, Etidloi Tunnillie, Tye Tunnillie, and Nuvalinga Kingwatsiak, with expert translation by Pootoogoo (Black) Elee. My work was substantially aided by the research conducted by Odette Leroux, Marion E. Jackson, and Minnie Aodla Freeman for their important exhibition *Isumavut: The Artistic Expression of Nine Cape Dorset Women* at the Canadian Museum of History in 1994.

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# OVILOO TUNNILLIE

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*Skier* 1993. (See below for details.)

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Key Works: Oviloo Tunnillie, *This Has Touched My Life*, 1991-92. (See below for details.)



Significance & Critical Issues: Oviloo Tunnillie, *Oviloo in Hospital Bed*, c.2000. (See below for details.)



Style & Technique: Close-up of Oviloo Tunnillie carving, 1992. (See below for details.)



Where to See: Exhibition photo of *Oviloo Tunnillie: A Woman's Story in Stone* at the Winnipeg Art Gallery, 2016, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Courtesy of the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Photo credit: Ernest Mayer.





# OVILOO TUNNILLIE

## Life & Work by Darlene Coward Wight



Sources & Resources: Ovilo Tunnillie, 1992. (See below for details.)

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*Ataata (Father)*, 2002. Collection of John and Joyce Price. Courtesy of the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Photo credit: Ernest Mayer. © Dorset Fine Arts.



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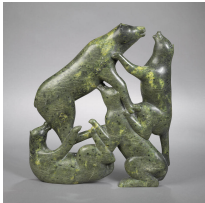
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*Football Player*, 1981. Government of Nunavut Fine Art Collection; on long-term loan to the Winnipeg Art Gallery (1.81.21). Courtesy of the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Photo credit: Ernest Mayer. © Dorset Fine Arts.



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*Man and Bear*, 1974-76. Collection of La Guilde, Montreal. Courtesy of the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Photo credit: Ernest Mayer. © Dorset Fine Arts.



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*My Father Carving a Bear*, 2004. Courtesy of Spirit Wrestler Gallery. Photo credit: Kenji Nagai. © Dorset Fine Arts.





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*My Father Toonoo Building an Inukshuk*, 1995. Private collection. Courtesy of Marion Scott Gallery. © Dorset Fine Arts.



*My Mother and Myself*, 1990. Collection of the Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau (IV-C:5486). Courtesy of the Winnipeg Art Gallery. © Dorset Fine Arts.



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*Nurse*, 1995. Collection of Jamie Cameron and Christopher Bredt. Courtesy of the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Photo credit: Ernest Mayer. © Dorset Fine Arts.



*Nurse with Crying Child*, 2001. Collection of John and Joyce Price. Courtesy of the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Photo credit: Ernest Mayer. © Dorset Fine Arts.



*On My Father's Shoulders*, 2002. Private collection. Courtesy of Feheley Fine Arts. © Dorset Fine Arts.



*Oviloo and Granddaughter Tye Holding Photo by Jerry Riley, 2002.* Collection of John and Joyce Price. Courtesy of the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Photo credit: Ernest Mayer. © Dorset Fine Arts.



*Oviloo and Toonoo, 2004.* Collection of Barry Appleton. Courtesy of the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Photo credit: Ernest Mayer. © Dorset Fine Arts.



*Oviloo in Hospital, c.2002.* Collection of Paul and Mary Dailey Desmarais. Courtesy of the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Photo credit: Ernest Mayer. © Dorset Fine Arts.



*Oviloo in Hospital Bed, c.2000.* The Terry Ryan Collection, Toronto. Courtesy of the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Photo credit: Ernest Mayer. © Dorset Fine Arts.



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*Owl, 1974.* Collection of the Winnipeg Art Gallery (2016-428). Gift of Marnie Schreiber. Courtesy of the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Photo credit: Ernest Mayer. © Dorset Fine Arts.



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*Self-Portrait (Arriving in Toronto)*, 2002. Collection of Andrea Ziegler. Courtesy of the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Photo credit: Ernest Mayer. © Dorset Fine Arts.



*Self-Portrait at Manitoba Hospital (Holding Teddy Bear)*, 2010. Collection of Jamie Cameron and Christopher Bredt. Courtesy of the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Photo credit: Ernest Mayer. © Dorset Fine Arts.



*Self-Portrait on Sled in 1959*, 1998. Collection of Jamie Cameron and Christopher Bredt. Courtesy of the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Photo credit: Ernest Mayer. © Dorset Fine Arts.





*Self-Portrait with Carving Stone*, 1998. Collection of Fred and Mary Widding. Courtesy of the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Photo credit: Ernest Mayer. © Dorset Fine Arts.



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*Synchronized Swimmer*, 1999. Collection of Barry Appleton. Courtesy of the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Photo credit: Ernest Mayer. © Dorset Fine Arts.



*This Has Touched My Life*, 1991-92. Collection of the Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau (IV-C-5498 a-d). Courtesy of the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Photo credit: Ernest Mayer. © Dorset Fine Arts.



*Thought Creates Meaning*, 1980. Collection of the Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau (IV-C:5490). Courtesy of the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Photo credit: Ernest Mayer. © Dorset Fine Arts.



*Time to Carve*, 2002. Collection of Feheley Fine Arts. Courtesy of the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Photo credit: Ernest Mayer. © Dorset Fine Arts.



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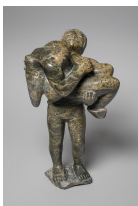
*Woman Carving Stone*, 2008. Collection of Barry Appleton. Courtesy of the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Photo credit: Ernest Mayer. © Dorset Fine Arts.



*Woman Covering Her Face*, 2000. Collection of Jane Ross. Photo credit: Robert McNair. © Dorset Fine Arts.



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*Woman Showing a Drawing*, 2006. Collection of the Winnipeg Art Gallery (2007-25). Acquired with funds from the Estate of Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Naylor, funds administered through The Winnipeg Foundation. Courtesy of the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Photo credit: Ernest Mayer. © Dorset Fine Arts.



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*Woman with Long Hair*, c.1994. Lois and Daniel Miller Collection, Montreal. Courtesy of the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Photo credit: Ernest Mayer. © Dorset Fine Arts.



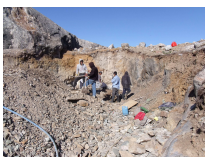
*Woman with Pot*, 2001. Collection of John and Joyce Price. Courtesy of the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Photo credit: Ernest Mayer. © Dorset Fine Arts.



*Woman with Stone Block*, 2007. Collection of Elizabeth Grace and Susan Vella. Courtesy of the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Photo credit: Ernest Mayer. © Dorset Fine Arts.

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A crew of Iqaluit carvers at a Korok Inlet quarry, 2011. Courtesy of the Government of Nunavut.





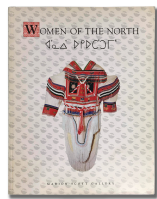
*Bird Spirit*, c.1960s, by Mary Qayuaryuk (Kudjuakjuk). Private collection. Courtesy of Walker's Auctions. Photo credit: Dieter Hessel. © Dorset Fine Arts.



Cape Dorset, 2004. Photo credit: Darlene Coward Wight.



Close-up of Oviloo Tunnillie carving, 1992. Photo credit: Jerry Riley. © Jerry Riley.



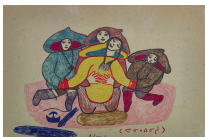
Cover of catalogue for the exhibition *Women of the North: An Exhibition of Art by Inuit Women of the Canadian Arctic*, Marion Scott Gallery, 1992.



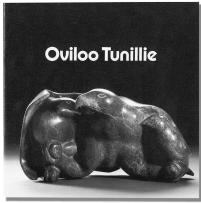
Cover of *Inuit Art Quarterly* (Summer/Fall 1992) featuring Oviloo Tunnillie and Granddaughter Tye, 1990, photograph by Jerry Riley. Courtesy of the Inuit Art Foundation.



Dog team pulling a sled, c.1949. Richard Harrington Fonds, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa (PA-129937). Courtesy of Library and Archives Canada / The Brechin Group Inc. Photo credit: Richard Harrington.



Drawing for Print "*Memories of Childbirth*," 1976, by Pitseolak Ashoona. Collection of the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative Ltd., on loan to the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario (CD.27.1184). Courtesy of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection. © Dorset Fine Arts.



Exhibition catalogue for *Oviloo Tunillie*, Inuit Galerie, Mannheim, Germany, 1988. Courtesy of Darlene Coward Wight.



Exhibition catalogue for *Oviloo Tunnillie*, Marion Scott Gallery, 1994.



Exhibition catalogue for *Oviloo Tunnillie: A Woman's Story in Stone*, 2016. Courtesy of the Winnipeg Art Gallery.



Exhibition catalogue for *Oviloo Tunnillie: Meditations on Womanhood*, Marion Scott Gallery, Vancouver, 2008. Courtesy of Darlene Coward Wight.



Exhibition pamphlet for *Toonoo's Legacy* at Feheley Fine Arts, Toronto, 2002.



*Hawk Prepares for Attack*, 1992, by Kananginak Pootoogook. Collection of the Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau (CD 1992-007). Courtesy of the Canadian Museum of History. © Dorset Fine Arts.



Ikayukta Tunnillie with Eliakami viewing her prints, c.1978. Photo credit: George Hunter / Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada.



# OVILOO TUNNILLIE

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Interior view of Clearwater Sanatorium, The Pas, Manitoba, September 1950. Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa (PA-067514). Courtesy of Library and Archives Canada / The Brechin Group Inc. Photo credit: Canadian Department of National Defence.



Interior view of Inuit quarters aboard the *C.D. Howe*, July 1957. Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa (PA-176873). Courtesy of Library and Archives Canada / The Brechin Group Inc. Photo credit: Wilfred Doucette / National Film Board of Canada.



Inuit boarding the *C.D. Howe*, July 1951. Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa (PA-189646). Courtesy of Library and Archives Canada / The Brechin Group Inc. Photo credit: Wilfred Doucette / National Film Board of Canada.



James Houston measuring a piece of soapstone, Cape Dorset, Nunavut, 1960. Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa (e010799886). Courtesy of Library and Archives Canada / The Brechin Group Inc. Photo credit: Rosemary Gilliat Eaton.



Map of Baffin Island. © Eric Leinberger.



*Memory of My Life: Breaking Bottles*, 2001-2, by Annie Pootoogook. Collection of Stephanie Comer and Rob Craigie. Courtesy of Expandinginuit.com / Rob Craigie.



Miss Ann Webster, RN, at the autoclave in the operating room aboard the *C.D. Howe*, c.1956. Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa (1983-120 NPC). Courtesy of Library and Archives Canada / The Brechin Group Inc. Photographer unknown.





*Mother and Child*, 1960-1965, by Toonoo. Collection of the Winnipeg Art Gallery (1110.71). Twomey Collection, with appreciation to the Province of Manitoba and Government of Canada. Courtesy of the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Photo credit: Lianed Marcoletta. © Dorset Fine Arts.



*Mother and Children*, c.1967, by Kenojuak Ashevak. Government of Nunavut Fine Art Collection; on long-term loan to the Winnipeg Art Gallery (1.71.95). Courtesy of the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Photo credit: Leif Norman. © Dorset Fine Arts.



Opening of *Isumavut: The Artistic Expression of Nine Cape Dorset Women*, at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1994. Courtesy of the Inuit Art Foundation.



Opening of the West Baffin Co-operative in Cape Dorset, November 1961. Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa (E010799833). Courtesy of Library and Archives Canada / The Brechin Group Inc. Photo credit: Terrence Ryan.



Oviloo Tunnillie, 1992. Courtesy of the Inuit Art Foundation. Photo credit: John Graydon.



Oviloo Tunnillie, 1992. Courtesy of the Inuit Art Foundation. Photo credit: John Graydon.



Oviloo Tunnillie in Cape Dorset, 1987. Courtesy of the Inuit Art Foundation. Photo credit: John Paskievich / Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada.



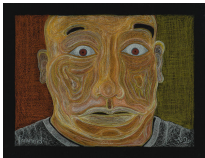
Oviloo Tunnillie on the steps outside the Vancouver Art Gallery, June 1992. Courtesy of the Winnipeg Art Gallery / Marion Scott Gallery. Photographer unknown.



Oviloo Tunnillie using an electric grinder. Film still from the 1993 documentary *Keeping Our Stories Alive: The Sculpture of Canada's Inuit*.



Oviloo Tunnillie using an electric grinder. Film still from *Adrienne Clarkson Presents*, November 12, 1997. © CBC.



*Paranoid*, 2012, by Jutai Toonoo. Collection of the Winnipeg Art Gallery (2012-205). Acquired with funds realized through sale of Inuit prints. Courtesy of the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Photo credit: Ernest Mayer. © Dorset Fine Arts.



Party lands from the Canadian Government ship *C.D. Howe* on patrol of the Eastern Arctic at Cape Dorset, July 1951. Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa (e005477082). Courtesy of Library and Archives Canada / The Brechin Group Inc. Photo credit: Wilfred Doucette / National Film Board of Canada.



*Qinnuajuaq*, 1976, by Kananginak Pootoogook. Collection of the Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau (CD 1976-055). Courtesy of the Canadian Museum of History. © Dorset Fine Arts.



*Self-Portrait in the Print Shop*, 2003, by Andrew Qappik. Collection of the Winnipeg Art Gallery (GN2005.3.21). Courtesy of the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Photo credit: Serge Saurette.



*Sky Spirit*, 1977, by Mary Qayuaryuk (Kudjuakjuk). Various collections. Courtesy of Hodgins Hall Auctions Ltd. © Dorset Fine Arts.



*Takannaaluk*, 1994, by Germaine Arnaktauyok. Collection of the Winnipeg Art Gallery (G-98-496). Acquired with the support of the Canada Council for the Arts Acquisition Assistance program and with funds from The Winnipeg Art Gallery Foundation Inc. Courtesy of the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Photo credit: Ernest Mayer.



Terry Ryan and the early stable of artists in front of the print shop, 1961. Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa (e002265682). Courtesy of Library and Archives Canada / The Brechin Group Inc. Photo credit: B. Korda / National Film Board of Canada.



*The Three Spirits*, 1971, by Ikayukta Tunnillie. Collection of the Winnipeg Art Gallery (G-89-1254). Gift of Indian and Northern Affairs, Canada. Courtesy of the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Photo credit: Serge Saurette. © Dorset Fine Arts.



Toonoo, 1958. Photo credit: Charles Gimpel.



Toonoo carving a qulliq in Cape Dorset, September 1958. Charles Gimpel Fonds, Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa (e004923447). Courtesy of Library and Archives Canada / The Brechin Group Inc. Photo credit: Charles Gimpel.



*Woman at Her Mirror (Playboy Pose)*, 2003, by Annie Pootoogook. Collection of John and Joyce Price. Courtesy of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario. © Dorset Fine Arts.



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# OVILOO TUNNILLIE

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